CELESTINA.

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A NOVEL.

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CELESTINA.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY was, at the age of thirty, left a widow with a ſon and a daughter, of whom ſhe was extremely fond, and to whoſe education ſhe entirely devoted herſelf. George Willoughby, her ſon, had been placed at Eton by his father, but attended by a private tutor, a man of ſenſe and learning, who was diſtantly related to their family. When he was about thirteen, a fever, from which he narrowly eſcaped, ſo injured his conſtitution, that his mother was directed by his phyſicians to take him to the South of Europe. Thither ſhe and

her daughter, with Mr. Everard, accompanied him. A few months completely reſtored his health; and they then went all together to Geneva; where, after a ſhort reſidence, ſhe left her ſon to purſue his ſtudies under the care of Mr. Everard; and with her daughter Matilda, then near eight years old, ſhe fixed herſelf for ſome time at Hieres, on the coaſt of Provence; a town with whoſe beauty ſhe had been much ſtruck four or five years before, when, to divert her concern for the loſs of her huſband, ſhe had made a tour of ſome months through France and Italy.

Matilda was placed in a convent, for the purpoſes of inſtruction; and there ſhe became the playfellow of a little girl almoſt three years younger, who was known among the Nuns by the name of *la petite Celeſtine*. The fondneſs which ſoon ſubſiſted between her and Matilda introduced her of courſe to Mrs. Willoughby, who was at firſt ſight charmed with her beauty, and after a few interviews, ſo delighted with her infantine careſſes,

reſſes that ſhe became as anxious to ſee her every day as ſhe was to ſee her own child. Her countenance, with that blooming delicacy which the French diſtinguiſh by calling it "*le vrai teint Anglois*," had all that animation which is more uſually found among the natives of the ſouth of Europe; yet this ſpirited expreſſion often melted into ſoftneſs ſo inſinuating, that it was difficult to ſay whether penſive tenderneſs or ſparkling vivacity was the moſt predominant; or whether it was the lovelineſs of her little form and face, or the enchantment of her manners, which made her ſo very attractive, that the very ſervants who ſaw her with Matilda became ſo fond of her, as never to carry her back to the convent, after a viſit to their lady, but with reluctance and regret.

The Nuns, however, with whom ſhe lived, ſeemed, either from ſeeing her conſtantly, or for want of taſte, to be quite inſenſible of perfections which won every other heart. They treated her ſometimes

with harſhneſs, and always with indifference; ſo that to be with Mrs. Willoughby ſoon became the greateſt happineſs the little Celeſtina could enjoy. Mrs. Willoughby found an equal pleaſure in returning her affection; and was ſometimes moved even to tears, when happening to careſs Matilda, the other amiable child would approach as if to ſhare her tenderneſs, take her hand, look innocently in her face, and ſay with a ſigh, "*Helas! que n'ai je auſſi une Ma-*
"*man.** !"

Theſe artleſs expreſſions, and the coldneſs with which the ſiſterhood treated their infant penſioner, raiſed in Mrs. Willoughby a great deſire to know to whom the child belonged: but every attempt to gain information was at firſt repreſſed by ſo much reſerve, that ſhe almoſt deſpaired of being gratified. At length however ſhe received a hint, that by the ſkilful application of means equally potent in Courts or Convents, ſhe might learn all the Nuns knew;

* Alas! why have not I a Mama too."

and

and in conſequence of purſuing this hint, ſhe was informed, that the laſt Superior of the houſe, who had been dead two years, had received Celeſtina into it when only a few months old, as a child whoſe birth it was of the utmoſt conſequence to conceal: that only the Superior herſelf, and her Confeſſor, who was alſo dead, had ever known to whom ſhe belonged; every trace of which ſecret had by them been ſo carefully obliterated, that after the deceaſe of both every attempt at diſcovery had been ineffectual. It was believed that a conſiderable ſum of money had been received as the price of ſecreſy, and as a proviſion for the child; but it had never been carried to account, or any part of it appropriated to the uſe of the community in general, who now conſequently murmured at the neceſſity they were under, as they ſaid, *par charité et pour l'amour de Dieu*,* to ſupport *la petite Celeſtine* for life: but they added, that as ſoon as ſhe was old enough to take

* Through charity, and for the love of God.

the vows, ſhe muſt become a Nun, and fill one of the inferior offices of the convent, ſince ſhe had no friends or money to pay for being on a higher footing.

The pity excited by this account, added to the ſenſibility with which, infant as ſhe was, ſhe felt her own ſituation; her tender attachment to her benefactreſs, and to Matilda, and the ſenſe and ſweetneſs viſible in all ſhe ſaid and did, procured for her, in the tender and generous heart of Mrs. Willoughby, an intereſt little ſhort of what ſhe felt for Matilda herſelf. Every hour increaſed this intereſt; till after a ſtay of eighteen months at Hieres, during which ſhe had ſeen her almoſt every day, ſhe found, in reflecting on her departure, that ſhe ſhould be really unhappy the reſt of her life, if ſhe returned to England, and left this amiable child to a fate ſo melancholy in itſelf, and ſo unworthy of the promiſe of prefection given by her infancy. Having once entertained the idea of taking her to England, it ſoon became too pleaſing

to

to be relinquiſhed. There were however great difficulties in the way. Though the community complained of Celeſtina as a burthen to them, they made, as they declared, a point of conſcience, not to part with her to an heretic; and the more ſolicitous Mrs. Willoughby became, the more they declaimed againſt the ſin it would be, to hazard the ſoul of *la petite Celeſtine* for the ſake of any worldly advantage. While the matter was yet in debate, George Willoughby and Mr. Everard, who had been ſent for, that the whole family might return to England together, arrived; and the latter finding how much Mrs. Willoughby deſired to become the ſole protectreſs of the little orphan, prevailed with Father Angelo, the preſent confeſſor, to remove at once all the ſcruples he had been inſtrumental in raiſing: in a word, Mr. Everard uſed the argument to which Monks, in deſpite of their profeſſions of poverty, are not more inſenſible than the reſt of mankind; and Mrs. Willoughby having left a

certificate of her having taken Celeſtina out of the convent, a promiſe to educate her without influencing her to change her religion, and to provide for her, together with a direction where ſhe might, in caſe of enquiry, be found, was permitted to carry with her, from Hieres, the lovely little French girl, who was from that hour put on an equal footing with her own daughter, and whom ſhe ſeemed as tenderly to love.

After an abſence of between three and four years, Mrs. Willoughby and her family returned to England; where to all her friends who were generally ſtruck with the beauty and elegance of her adopted child, ſhe related, without reſerve, the little hiſtory of their accidental attachment.

George Willoughby, now in his ſeventeenth year, was ſent to Cambridge: his tutor retired to a ſmall living, which had fallen near his eſtate in the Weſt of England, ſince his abſence, and to which his mother, as patroneſs in his minority, had

had preſented this excellent and amiable man.

Mrs. Willoughby uſually paſſed the winters in London; where maſters of muſic, drawing, dancing and languages, attended her two girls, for ſo ſhe equally termed Matilda and her little friend:—their ſummers were divided between public places and Alſtone (or Alveſtone, as it was ſpelt,) an eſtate between Sidmouth and Exeter, of which her huſband had been ſo fond, that he had hurt his fortune by the large ſums he had expended on its improvement. This attachment George ſeemed to inherit; and in compliment to him his mother always paſſed the vacations there: Willoughby himſelf having no pleaſure ſo great as in talking and thinking of the happineſs he ſhould enjoy, when he ſhould become maſter of Alſtone, and ſee his mother and ſiſter, of whom he was extremely fond, ſettled there with him for the greateſt part of every year. Mrs. Willoughby, whoſe love for him might

have been ſaid to border on weakneſs, if it had been poſſible to diſcover any exceſs in the attachment of a mother to a ſon ſo uncommonly deſerving, had always encouraged the inclination he had from his infancy betrayed for this his paternal ſeat: though his little projects often gave her pain; for ſhe knew, what ſhe had with more tenderneſs than prudence ſtudiouſly concealed from him, that his father's affairs were at his death ſo much embarraſſed, as to render it doubtful whether a minority of near thirteen years would ſo far clear his eſtates, as to enable him at the end of that period to reſide in this favourite place, with the ſplendour and hoſpitality for which his anceſtors had for centuries been eminent. The laſt Mr. Willoughby had indeed continued the ſame line of conduct in the country; but his manner of living in town had been quite unlike that of his prudent and plainer anceſtors; who had but juſt recovered his eſtate, when it was tranſmitted to him, from the injuries it had

had received by their adherence to Charles the First; during whose unfortunate reign they had sold some part of their extensive possessions, and had been plundered of more. His grandfather and great-grandfather had nearly retrieved the whole of the estate round Alverstone, where they piqued themselves on losing none of the family consequence; but the manners of the times in which he lived, and a disposition extremely gay and volatile, had led the last possessor into expences, which, if they did not oblige him to sell, had obliged him to mortgage great part of this, as well as all his other estates; and being charged at his death with twelve hundred a year to his widow, and the interest of ten thousand pounds given to his daughter, they slowly and with difficulty produced, under the management of very careful executors, little more than sufficient to pay such charges, and the interest of the money for which they were mortgaged.

Mrs. Willoughby however was unwilling to interrupt the felicity of her ſon's happieſt hours, by repreſenting to him a dreary proſpect of the future; eſpecially as ſhe thought that future might, as it advanced, become brighter; and that it was poſſible all his gay viſions might be realized. He had a great uncle, far advanced in life, and very rich, who, though the late Mr. Willoughby had diſobliged him, might, ſhe thought, through mere family pride, give to the ſon, what he had often declared the father ſhould never poſſeſs. Her brother, Lord Caſtlenorth, was the laſt male of his illuſtrious race: he had only a daughter; and an increaſe of his family becoming every day more improbable, he had concerted with his ſiſter, even while George (who was younger than his daughter) was yet a child, how the family might be reſtored by a union of its two remaining branches.

The good ſenſe of Mrs. Willoughby had not entirely ſaved her from family pride;

pride; and this project, which the situation of her son's fortune rendered doubly desirable, had by degrees taken such possession of her mind, that nothing would have made her more unhappy, than suspecting it might not take effect. After her return with her family from France, she had an interview with her brother, Lord Castlenorth, who was then in England (though his health occasioned him for the most part to reside abroad), and it was then agreed with him, or rather with Lady Castlenorth, whose will was his law, that if the young people liked each other, of which they hardly suffered themselves to doubt, the match should take place as soon as young Willoughby became of age, who was then to assume the name of Fitz-Hayman, and in whose favour, when united with the sole heiress of the family, there was little doubt of procuring the succession to the title. Willoughby, who was yet ignorant of this proposed arrangement, had accompanied his mother in her visit: but far from feeling

ing any partiality for his couſin, he had hardly taken any notice of her, and had paſſed all thoſe hours when common civility did not oblige him to attend the family, in wandering with his tutor over the extenſive domain belonging to his Lordſhip's magnificent ſeat. He ſeemed indeed much more ſenſible of the charms of Caſtle-north, which was the name of his uncle's houſe, from whence the title was derived, than pleaſed with either its preſent or its future poſſeſſor. Mr. Everard, who anxiouſly watched every emotion of his mind, ſaw this, and he ſaw too that his pupil was of a temper which would ill bear to be dictated to in a point ſo nearly connected with his own happineſs. He prevailed therefore, with ſome difficulty, on Mrs. Willoughby, not to explain her views till nearer the period when ſhe meant they ſhould be perfected; and they left Caſtle-north without Willoughby's having the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion of them, or carrying away any other idea of his couſin, than that

ſhe

ſhe was a tall, fat, formal brown girl, whom he ſoon forgot and never deſired to remember. His uncle's complaints and quack medicines—his long lectures on genealogy and heraldry—had tired him; and Lady Caſtlenorth's dictatorial manners offended and diſguſted him. He told Mr. Everard, that the only hour in which he had felt any pleaſure during his abode at their houſe, was that in which his mother fixed the time of departing for her own. Thither he returned with redoubled delight, after the reſtraint he had felt himſelf under at Caſtlenorth; for there lay all his plans of future felicity, and there were Matilda and Celeſtina, his two ſiſters, as he always called them, who ſeemed equally dear to him.

In a few months he went to Cambridge; and Mr. Everard, who afterwards ſaw him only for a few days in the year, had no longer the ſame opportunities of judging of his ſentiments. He ſtill however had intereſt enough with Mrs. Willoughby, to prevail

prevail on her to delay any intimation of the intended alliance. Lord Caſtlenorth, his lady, and daughter, were now in Italy, and were to remain there till within ſix months of the time fixed among themſelves for the marriage of the latter: but above a twelvemonth before the arrival of the former period, Mr. Everard died. Mrs. Willoughby and her family loſt in him the ſincereſt friend and moſt capable monitor: a loſs which greatly affected Willoughby, as well as his mother, who ſent for her ſon from Cambridge on that melancholy occaſion. Thither he had hardly returned, before the uncle of his father, on whom he had great dependance, and who had not long before taken him into his favour, and promiſed to make him his heir, died without having altered his will, and endowed an hoſpital with the eſtate which he had really meant to give his nephew, had not death overtaken him before he could conquer his habitual indolence, aggravated by the

the feebleneſs and imbecility of eighty-ſeven.

This diſappointment was ſeverely felt by Mrs. Willoughby, who apprehended that not only the immediate but the contingent intereſt of her ſon might be deeply affected by it: ſhe doubted whether it would not change the intentions of her brother in his favor; but after ſome weeks of uneaſy ſuſpenſe, ſhe received aſſurances from Italy that thoſe his intentions and wiſhes were ſtill the ſame.

Mrs. Willoughby, though re-aſſured in this reſpect, was ſtill in very low ſpirits, and felt every hour, with encreaſing ſeverity, the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained in ſuch a friend as Mr. Everard, whom ſhe lamented indeed publicly, but ſtill more bitterly in private. Her conſtitution, naturally very delicate, began to decline under the ſorrow which oppreſſed her. Matilda, then about ſixteen, was the only perſon about her who ſeemed inſenſible of the alteration which now made a ſlow but very evident progreſs

greſs in her looks and manner. Her countenance was ſtill pleaſing and intereſting, but very languid: her eyes had loſt their fire; and ſhe grew very thin. Her amiable manners remained; but all her vivacity in converſation was fled. She no longer enjoyed ſociety, of which ſhe had been ſo fond: but ſhe ſtill went into company, becauſe Matilda, now of an age to enter into all the gaieties of high life, did indeed engage in them with an avidity which her mother was too indulgent to repreſs, though ſhe could not approve it. Sometimes however ſhe ſuffered ſo much from crouded rooms and late hours, that though ſhe did not even then complain, her phyſicians inſiſted on her forbearing ſo continually to hazard her health. Matilda, who was very uneaſy if long kept from company, was then put under the care of ſome of her mother's friends, and the taſk of attending on her beloved benefactreſs fell entirely to the lot of Celeſtina, who was never ſo happy as when employed

employed in it, and who now having juſt completed her fourteenth year, ſurpaſſed, in the perfections both of perſon and mind, all that Mrs. Willoughby, partial as ſhe had always been to her, had ever ſuppoſed ſhe would attain.

Above two years paſſed away: Willoughby purſuing very regularly his ſtudies at Cambridge; Matilda purſuing as regularly every amuſement that offered itſelf; and Celeſtina, careleſs of all that has uſually attractions for youth, devoting her whole time and thoughts to Mrs. Willoughby, who without ſaying any thing of what ſhe felt to be inevitable, was gradually ſinking into the grave.

This conviction made her determine to diſcloſe to her ſon, when ſhe next ſaw him, her purpoſe in regard to Miſs Fitz-Hayman: but it was a reſolution ſhe could not bring herſelf to make, without infinite regret; for in giving her reaſons for wiſhing this alliance, it was neceſſary for her to open to him the real ſtate of his fortune;

of

of which her tenderneſs, in this inſtance perhaps injudicious, had hitherto kept him in ignorance. The longer this affectionate mother thought of the pain ſhe ſhould thus inflict on her ſon, the leſs ſhe found herſelf able to undertake it: ſhe therefore determined that Mr. Dawſon, who had been employed many years by his father as ſteward and manager of the eſtates, ſhould, under pretence of conſulting him on his affairs, now that he was of an age to direct in them, diſcloſe to him their real ſituation. For this purpoſe he went to Cambridge; and there this unpleaſant explanation was made to Willoughby: who learned that his father, towards the latter end of his life, had mortgaged above a third of his property for nearly its value; that what remained was not only encumbered by heavy debts, which were to be diſcharged out of it, but had a charge of twelve hundred a year, his mother's jointure, and was to pay his ſiſter ten thouſand pounds, with intereſt till ſhe married—

burthens

burthens which ſo diminiſhed the income, as to make it impoſſible to ſave any thing during his minority, and left him no proſpect of ever enjoying his paternal eſtate unembarraſſed, but by an opulent marriage. Though Mr. Dawſon had, with as much caution and tenderneſs as poſſible, opened to Willoughby the real condition of his affairs, the young man, of warm paſſions and keen feelings, could not hear ſuch a mortifying account but with the extremeſt pain and humiliation. Unable to remain tranquilly at Cambridge, he immediately ſet out for London, and aſked of his mother a farther explanation; as if unwilling to receive from any hand but her's a blow ſo cruel, which ſeemed to deſtroy for ever all his favourite hopes.

Mrs. Willoughby had ever been ſo far from ſuſpecting that her ſon loved money, that a tendency to careleſsneſs in that reſpect had ſometimes alarmed her: ſhe was therefore extremely ſurprized at the eagerneſs of his enquiries, and the evident anxiety

anxiety and concern he expreſſed at his diſappointment. But having convinced him that all he had heard was but too true, and recovered from the agitation into which the neceſſity of giving him ſo much pain had thrown her, ſhe ſeized the opportunity, while his mind ſeemed to turn with uneaſy ſolicitude towards the means of redeeming his patrimony, to ſuggeſt to him the plan ſhe had ſo long conſidered as infallible—"My dear George," ſaid ſhe, "there is one way by which all this may be remedied; and your eſtate, devolving to you from a long line of anceſtors, of whom any man might be proud, may not only be repaired but encreaſed, by an alliance of which an ambitious man may be ſtill prouder. My brother, Lord Caſtlenorth, is the laſt male of a line diſtinguiſhed ſince the conqueſt; your couſin, his only daughter, will inherit his fortune; the titles die with him. It is equally natural therefore for him and for me, to wiſh, that you, my ſon, in becoming the huſband

of

of my niece, may poſſeſs the eſtates and honours of my family, which on ſuch a union would be eaſily obtained; and that in you may be revived, or rather perpetuated, the family of Fitz Hayman. I did not intend to have named this to you till your farther acquaintance with your couſin, who returns to England in the courſe of the next ſummer, ſhould have made it on your part a meaſure of inclination; for from all the accounts I have had of her, ſhe is very amiable and highly accompliſhed: but my uncertain health, and the near approach of that period when you become maſter of yourſelf, have at length determined me to tell you my thoughts in a matter, on which the proſperity of your future life depends. I need not ſay, George, that ſeeing it in that light, there is nothing in this world ſo near my heart as its completion."

Willoughby, whoſe mind was contending with the various emotions this diſcourſe of his mother's had raiſed, remained ſilent and

and confuſed. He changed colour; he ſighed, as if to throw off the unexpected preſſure on his heart; and Mrs. Willoughby, who ſaw with concern that he entered not into the project with the alacrity ſhe had expected, began again to deſcribe to him not only the numerous advantages which muſt follow the marriage, but to repeat all ſhe had heard, and more than ſhe had imagined, of the perfections of Miſs Fitz-Hayman.

Willoughby however appeared rather to be muſing than attending to almoſt the only converſation from his mother that he had ever thought tedious. When ſhe ſeemed to have exhauſted the ſubject, he ſtill pauſed a moment; then taking his hand from his forehead, he aſked his mother—whether ſhe thought Miſs Fitz-Hayman as lovely as Celeſtina?

"As lovely as Celeſtina!" replied Mrs. Willoughby in great and apparently painful ſurprize—"How came Celeſtina to occur to you?"

"Nay," anſwered her ſon, attempting to

to appear indifferent—I know not how, unleſs becauſe ſhe is the prettieſt young woman I have lately ſeen."

"Surely you do not think of Celeſtina," reaſſumed Mrs. Willoughby with encreaſed emotion—"ſurely you are not imprudent enough to entertain an idea of her otherwiſe than as a ſiſter. There are objections—inſuperable objections. For God's ſake, George, let me be aſſured that you will never again think of her."

"Dear Madam," returned Willoughby with ſome quickneſs, "that is really more than I can promiſe. How is it poſſible for me to aſſure you, with any hope of my being able to keep my word, that I will not think of a beautiful and intereſting object, which, whenever I am with you, is continually before my eyes."

"Well then," ſaid his mother with yet more chagrin, "ſince it is ſo, you will compel me to remove her where——"

"Surely," cried the young man, eagerly interrupting her, "that would be

very cruel—very cruel as it would affect Celeſtina, and very unneceſſary as it relates to me; for I ſhall now be very ſeldom at home; and I can, without any danger of breaking my word, aſſure you, that nothing will ever make your ſon forget the duty he owes you, or hazard giving you pain. I am very ſorry I named Celeſtina, ſince you ſeem ſo uneaſy at it. Think of it no more, I beſeech you; and continue to love, as you uſed to do, my adopted ſiſter, or I ſhall never forgive myſelf for my inadvertence."

Willoughby then, without ſtaying to talk over farther the propoſed alliance with Miſs Fitz-Hayman, hurried away; and that he might avoid all farther converſation with his mother, he ſtaid out to ſupper that night, and immediately after breakfaſt the following morning returned to Cambridge; telling her, as he took leave, that it would be time enough to talk over the buſineſs ſhe had opened to him when the parties to whom it related were in England, but that

ſhe

ſhe might aſſure herſelf that *her* happineſs was always nearer his heart than his own.

This was the firſt time in his life that he parted from Matilda and Celeſtina without ſaluting them both. When breakfaſt was over, and he had taken leave of his mother, he kiſſed his ſiſter as uſual, and was approaching Celeſtina, who already held out her hand to him, when catching his mother's eye, who ſeemed to look at him reproachingly, he bluſhed, and only bowing and wiſhing Celeſtina her health till he ſaw her again, he haſtened to the door, and without venturing even to look at her, as ſhe followed him thither with his mother and ſiſter, he mounted his horſe and diſappeared.

Hurt cruelly at this behaviour, (which from the very different judgment ſhe had formed of it, had yet more alarmed his mother,) Celeſtina could not repreſs the tears which ſhe felt riſing to her eyes. Mrs. Willoughby ſtood at the door till her ſon turned into another ſtreet; and was then

going to her own room, when Celeſtina, from an emotion ſhe could not command, caught her hand and burſt into tears: and for the firſt time in her life, her benefactreſs, inſtead of ſoothing her, received her mournful careſſes with repulſive coldneſs, and almoſt without ſpeaking to her left her. Matilda was as uſual engaged to a morning concert, and had neither time nor inclination to attend to the concern of Celeſtina or the diſpleaſure of her mother, which indeed ſhe either did not ſee, or ſeeing, reflect upon. Poor Celeſtina therefore, who never ſuſpected the real ſource of Willoughby's affected coldneſs, nor could imagine why his mother, who always found pleaſure and comfort in her company, ſhould now fly from her, concluded ſhe had offended them both, and paſſed the morning in tears. At dinner, however, Mrs. Willoughby, as if conſcious of her injuſtice, behaved to her with even more than her accuſtomed tenderneſs. After they had dined, as Matilda was ſtill

out,

out, their reading went on as uſual. Mrs. Willoughby took no notice of the ſwolen eyes and half-ſtifled ſobs which ſtill agitated the gentle boſom of her young friend; but without naming the cauſe, ſhe ſeemed ſolicitous to remove every remaining uneaſineſs; and by her eaſy and affectionate manner Celeſtina became convinced that concern for her ſon's departure, and not anger towards her, had occaſioned the coldneſs which had ſo much alarmed her; and her ſoft heart was thus reſtored to tranquillity.

CHAPTER II.

THOUGH Mrs. Willoughby took infinite pains to appear cheerful, and to hide the progreſs of the illneſs which was undermining her conſtitution, her efforts to appear better than ſhe was, could not deceive her phyſicians; who now propoſed that ſhe ſhould go either to Liſbon or the South of France. This preſcription however ſhe endeavoured to evade, by aſſuring them that travelling ſo late in the year would infallibly injure rather than be uſeful to her; but ſhe promiſed to follow their advice early in the enſuing ſpring, and to paſs the winter at Bath. Thither ſhe repaired in November, with her daughter and Celeſtina, to remain ſome months. Willoughby declined joining them at the end of term, contrary to his uſual cuſtom: he

he informed his mother, by letter, that he had made a party with ſome of his friends to paſs the Chriſtmas vacation at Alveſtone, and that on their way back to Cambridge they would ſtay two or three days at Bath.

Matilda in the mean time, who frequented every public amuſement, was become a Bath beauty, followed and admired by that deſcription of men whoſe opinion is conſidered as deciſive in the world of faſhion. Miſs Willoughby was always moſt elegantly dreſſed; for to be ſo was the principal ſtudy of her life. She was always with people of rank, was of an honourable family, had a good fortune, great connections, a pretty perſon, and was, to uſe the common phraſe, "extremely accompliſhed;" that is, ſhe knew ſomething of every thing, and talked as if ſhe knew a great deal more. Among the men of ton who contributed to feed her vanity and raiſe her faſhion, was Mr. Molyneux, the only ſon of an Iriſh Baronet, of whom the bounty of a grandfather had made him in-

dependent. With an handſome figure, a good fortune, and a title in reverſion, Mr. Molyneux was every where courted and admired; and by lounging about from one public place to another during the ſummer, and paſſing his winters, whether in England or Ireland, in the very firſt world, he had acquired ſo high a poliſh, that his manners and his dreſs, his expreſſions, and even his air, were copied by all the riſing beaux. His underſtanding was juſt of that level which rendered him capable of being pleaſed with this ſpecies of fame; and having no great warmth of heart, he had no other motive of choice in marrying than that which aroſe from his ſolicitude to maintain his importance as a man of taſte in the faſhionable world. He had indeed no great inclination to marry at all; but his father, now far advanced in life, preſſed him ſo earneſtly to take a wife, and he was ſo beſieged by the kind entreaties of two maiden aunts who had a great deal to give him, that tired by their

their importunity, and willing enough to oblige them in a matter which was indifferent to himſelf, he at length, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, fixed on Miſs Willoughby, as a pretty woman, well born, and above all—very much "the rage." Propoſals from ſuch a man were of courſe accepted by the mother and the daughter; Willoughby was pleaſed to hear his ſiſter was likely to be ſo well eſtabliſhed; and in a few weeks it was ſettled that the wedding was to take place in February, when Mrs. Willoughby and her family propoſed returning to London.

When Willoughby came with his Cambridge friends to Bath, to fulfil the promiſe given to his mother, he was introduced to his future brother-in-law. But a very ſhort obſervation convinced him that they were not deſigned for friends; and that however cloſely they might be allied, Mr. Molyneux would ſtill be to him a mere acquaintance. Willoughby was eager in the purſuit of knowledge; his mind, already

highly cultivated, his heart warm and open, and his manners, with all the ingenuous ſimplicity of youth, had the natural good breeding which only good underſtanding can give. Whatever was the real character of Molyneux, it was no longer diſtinguiſhable under the poliſh of faſhion; to obtain which, alone, ſeemed to be his ſtudy; all his ideas of good and evil, of right or wrong, centered there. If books had been the object, in the circle where he moved, he would have qualified himſelf to talk upon them; but as they were not, his reading never extended beyond a ſhort novel, a pamphlet, or a newſpaper. To ſtrike out ſomething new in a cape or a carriage, ſomething which the great would imitate and the little wonder at, was half the purpoſe of his life: to have any affections was reckoned extremely vulgar; and as he really had as few as was well poſſible, it coſt him but little trouble to diveſt himſelf of them entirely, and to obtain that *ſang froid* which is the true criterion of

of a man of fashion. It is absolutely necessary to be in the House of Commons. A seat therefore he had for a Cornish borough; where he gave a silent vote to the Minister for the time being, and neither cared nor enquired whether it would benefit or injure his country, about which he was perfectly indifferent. Yet with a mind occupied almost entirely by trifles, his handsome figure, his affluent fortune and fashionable manners, gave him that consequence which is often denied to virtues and talents. His air was that of a man of rank; and the calm coldness of his manner gave an idea of latent powers, which he was supposed to be too indolent to exert.

Matilda, in many respects, seemed to be his very counterpart. Since they had been so much together, she had adopted his thoughts and caught his phrases; and her brother, though he did not think her by any means improved by the imitation, allowed, that if similarity of character gives happiness in marriage, his sister had a pros-

pect of being completely happy. But when he looked at Celeſtina, which he avoided doing as much as poſſible, he ſaw in her improvements ſo different from thoſe of Matilda, that all his reſolutions to wean his mind from dwelling on her perfections faded before her. She was now in her ſeventeenth year, with a face and form which inſtantly attracted the eye, even before the beauties of her underſtanding had time to diſplay themſelves. Theſe latter ſhe never obtruded on obſervation; but was as ſilent in company as Matilda was talkative and gay. The loveline ſs of her form therefore it was that immediately ſtruck the young companions of Willoughby; who both, the inſtant they quitted the room where they had been introduced to Mrs. Willoughby, her daughter, and Celeſtina, aſked of Willoughby farther particulars of his adopted ſiſter, declaring they had never ſeen ſo charming a girl, and expreſſing their wonder at the calmneſs with which he had frequently ſpoken of her. This converſation was ſo

uneaſy

uneasy to him, that he could with difficulty conceal his vexation; and as his college friends from time to time renewed it, that circumstance, added to the pain he felt in forcing himself to behave to Celestina with cold and distant civility, shortened his visit to three days; at the end of which time he took leave of his mother, who again mentioned to him her views in regard to Miss Fitz-Hayman; to which Willoughby, who was less than ever inclined to listen to her on that point, returned vague but gentle answers; escaping from it as well as he could without giving any thing like a promise, he hastened back to his books, among which he hoped to lose the idea of Celestina, which he could not cherish but at the hazard of rendering either his mother or himself unhappy.

He promised to attend in London his sister's wedding, which was now to take place in a month, and for which preparations were making: but about a week before the day fixed for Mrs. Willoughby's

departure for London, an inflammation on her already injured lungs ſeized her ſo ſuddenly, that there was only time to ſend an expreſs to Cambridge for her ſon, who, notwithſtanding his utmoſt expedition, arrived hardly an hour before his excellent parent expired.

As ſhe had before taken leave of her daughter and Celeſtina, the greater part of that melancholy hour was given to her ſon, ever the object of her tendereſt affections. What paſſed was known only to Willoughby, who, the moment his mother was no more, gave way to ſuch an exceſs of ſorrow, as deprived him for ſome hours of his ſenſes; and when they were reſtored, the ſight of Matilda's calmneſs, who did not ſeem to him to feel half the concern ſhe ought to do, and the perfect compoſure of Molyneux, who evidently felt nothing, ſeemed to him ſo inſupportable, that he ſhut himſelf up in his own lodgings and refuſed every offer of conſolation. Though Celeſtina had long apprehended that the

life

life of her beloved benefactreſs was in a much more precarious ſituation than ſhe could herſelf allow, or than Matilda was willing to ſee, yet this cruel and yet unexpected blow quite overwhelmed her: but Willoughby, as unable to bear the ſight of her grief as diſpleaſed at the ſtoical compoſure of his ſiſter, fled with equal ſolicitude from both of them; and having given directions for removing the remains of his mother to the family ſeat at Alveſtone, he haſtened thither himſelf to receive and pay them the laſt offices; which being done, he wrote to his ſiſter, recommending it to her to return to London with Celeſtina, and to ſend for an elderly maiden relation to remain with them till her marriage, which the death of her mother had of neceſſity poſtponed: he promiſed to ſee her in town in the courſe of a fortnight, there to execute, as far as he could, thoſe parts of his mother's will which demanded immediate attention.

In purſuance of theſe directions the two young

young ladies ſet out for London, Mr. Molyneux following them in his own carriage. The ſight of the houſe which had now loſt its miſtreſs, threw Celeſtina into all thoſe agonies which the recollection of paſt happineſs and paſt kindneſs, from a lamented friend, gives to a heart ſo tender and ſo ſenſible as her's; while Matilda, who ſhed a tear or two from feeling ſomething of the ſame ſenſation, preſently recovered herſelf, and received her lover, who waited upon her immediately after his arrival, without betraying any ſymptoms of emotion which could give him cauſe to apprehend that the repoſe of his future life might ſuffer any interruption from the too exquiſite ſenſibility of his wife.

At the time he had appointed, Wilboughby rejoined them. Though he now ſaw them with leſs emotion, his melancholy ſeemed to be deeper than at firſt. With his ſiſter he avoided all converſation that was not abſolutely neceſſary; with Celeſtina he was even more reſerved, and never,

as in their happier days, brought his books and ſat with her, or ſought her converſation as his greateſt pleaſure. He contrived indeed under pretence of having affairs to ſettle abroad, to ſee her only at dinner or ſupper; and frequently, under pretence of illneſs, abſented himſelf from both.

After having been with them a few days, during which this reſerved and altered behaviour almoſt broke the heart of Celiſtina, who ſeemed to have loſt by the death of the mother, the friendſhip of the ſon, he ſent up one of the female ſervants to her room, when ſhe retired thither after breakfaſt, to beg to ſpeak to her in his ſiſter's dreſſing room. This formal meſſage, ſo unlike the brotherly familiarity with which he uſed to treat her, cut her to the heart, but ſhe immediately attended the ſummons.

Willoughby bowed on her entrance. They both ſat down: Celeſtina trying to check the tears ſhe found riſing to her eyes, and the ſighs which ſwelled her boſom. His looks, ſo pale, ſo changed from what they

they were, his attitude, his ſilence, all contributed to diſtreſs her; while he ſeemed collecting fortitude to go through the taſk he was to execute. After a ſhort pauſe, he took from his pocket book a paper, opened it, and counted out three Bank notes, of five hundred pounds each, on the table; then advancing towards her with them in his hand, he preſented them to her, ſaying, in a voice which he did not intend ſhould faulter—"There, Madam, is the ſum which Mrs. Willoughby—which my mother, by her will bequeaths you, and which, as her executor, I moſt willingly pay you. Allow me to wiſh you every happineſs—and——." He would have gone on: but Celeſtina, who had ariſen on his approaching her, turned pale and ſat down. "You are not well," ſaid he: "the recollection of my mother——"

"Does indeed overcome me," anſwered Celeſtina. "*I* have loſt a mother—and a brother too——Yes! I have loſt all!"

"Pardon

"Pardon me, Miſs de Mornay," replied Willoughby, "I meant not to diſtreſs you—and——"

"Miſs de Mornay!" repeated Celeſtina, again interrupting him—"*Miſs* de Mornay and *Madam*. Ah! Mr. Willoughby! thoſe appellations of diſtant civility convince me that I have no longer a friend—a brother——"

"Nay, but my dear Madam, be not, I beſeech you, guilty of ſo much injuſtice. Let me execute the directions given me by my dear deceaſed mother, whoſe orders you know were, that within two months after her deceaſe theſe ſhould be put in your poſſeſſion." He then again offered the notes to her.

Celeſtina put forth her trembling hand; but inſtantly withdrew it.—"I cannot take the notes, indeed, Mr. Willoughby," ſaid ſhe. "What can I do with them? I, who am a minor, a ſtranger, an orphan; who have no relation, no guardian—no friend! I did indeed hope," continued ſhe, her eyes filling with tears from the

the recollection of her forlorn ſituation—"I did indeed hope that you, Sir, would have had the goodneſs to have kept it for me till——"

"She ſtopped from inability to proceed, "Till when, my dear Miſs de Mornay?" cried Willoughby with eagerneſs he ſeemed endeavouring to check—"Certainly I would if it had been in my power; but it was my ſolemn promiſe to my mother to pay it into your hands, or into thoſe of any perſon whom you ſhould appoint."

"And cannot I name *you* as being that perſon?"

"Pardon me, dear Celeſtina," anſwered Willoughby, ſpeaking haſtily, as if fearful of relapſing into the fondneſs he once felt, and deſirous of quitting a painful ſubject—"pardon me, it is not poſſible for me to be of that ſervice to you which moſt aſſuredly I ſhould rejoice to be if—"

"Dear Celeſtina!" replied ſhe. "Ah! Willoughby! I have ſeen for many, many months, that I am no longer your once

dear

dear ſiſter Celeſtina. Call me Madam and Miſs de Mornay, as you did juſt now, rather than flatter me with the ſound, when the ſincerity of your regard is gone! Well, Sir! ſince, for reaſons which perhaps I ought not to penetrate, it is no longer in *your* power to act by me as a brother and a friend, I will no farther intrude on your kindneſs than to beg you will tell me how I ought to place the proviſion thus made for me by my benefactreſs."

Willoughby half ſtifled a deep ſigh; and after a moment's pauſe ſaid--" I would adviſe you to place it immediately on government ſecurity, in the names of two perſons on whom you can rely, till you become of age. Dawſon, who was, you know, always employed by my mother, is more converſant than I am in theſe matters. If you will give me leave I will ſend him to you; and I am convinced you may ſafely truſt to his honour and probity."

He then again offered the notes he had in his hand. Celeſtina took them in ſilence, being

being in truth unable to ſpeak; and turning haſtily away, he reached the door, where he ſtopped as if irreſolute; then in a low and faultering voice he ſaid—"As I ſhall probably ſee you no more, unleſs in mixed company, before I return to Cambridge, I cannot take this my laſt leave without aſſuring you, that however circumſtances may, alas! *muſt* prevent my ſhewing it, my heart can never be indifferent to the welfare—to the happineſs of my ſiſter Celeſtina."

There was no time for the trembling auditor to anſwer this addreſs, to reflect on the peculiar way in which the whole was delivered, nor on the ſtrong emphaſis laid on the words *may* and *muſt*; for he was in a moment at the bottom of the ſtairs, and Celeſtina, who remained in breathleſs agitation, with the door of the apartment ſtill open, heard him a moment afterwards call to his ſervant for his hat, and the door of the houſe preſently ſhut after him. She then ſat down and burſt into

into tears, for which ſhe was, on a little reflection, aſhamed to aſſign a reaſon even to herſelf. "For what do I weep," ſaid ſhe—"or why am I diſappointed? What did I expect? that Willoughby was attached to me? Surely no! for he never gave me any reaſon to imagine it, and of late has ſedulouſly avoided me, as if he ſuppoſed me weak and vain enough to miſinterpret the friendſhip and regard he uſed to ſhew me. Let me, while he does ſtay, convince him that he may without prejudice to his views in regard to Miſs Fitz-Hayman, ſtill treat me and conſider me as his ſiſter, and that I never thought of being looked upon otherwiſe, which ſurely he muſt have fancied, or he would not behave to me as he does!" Another flood of tears relieved the ſwelling heart of Celeſtina after this ſoliloquy. She then dried her eyes, dreſſed, and acquired ſo much command over herſelf as to meet Willoughby at dinner without betraying any ſymptoms of the uneaſineſs and mortification

fication ſhe ſtill ſuffered; and when the next day he took leave of her and Matilda, ſhe bade him adieu with the ſame apparent calmneſs.

Three months paſſed, and the time fixed for Matilda's marriage arrived. Willoughby then wrote to deſire his ſiſter would excuſe his devoting only a ſingle day to her on that occaſion: he would attend he ſaid to give her away, but was obliged by indiſpenſible buſineſs to return immediately afterwards to Cambridge. Matilda remarked how ſtrange it was that her brother, who had now been ſome time of age, was ſo bigotted to his books that he could not leave them for longer than a day even on ſuch an occaſion; but his pleaſures and her's differed ſo greatly, and their tempers and purſuits were ſo oppoſite, that no ſympathy had for ſome years exiſted between them; though on the part of Willoughby there was always great affection for her; and on her's as much regard for her brother as it was her nature to feel

for

for any body. This difference of ſentiment and inclination however had inſenſibly ſo far eſtranged them from each other, that the company of Willoughby was oftener a reſtraint than a pleaſure to his ſiſter, and therefore as ſhe felt little regret in loſing it, ſhe thought not much about his motives for depriving her of it.

The evening before that on which Matilda was by ſpecial licence to be married to Mr. Molyneux, her brother arrived: but inſtead of the gaiety the occaſion required, or even that which had formerly been uſual with him, his melancholy and regret ſeemed to have become habitual by indulgence. He hardly ſpoke: and when he did, it was with ſuch languor that Matilda might with reaſon have been alarmed for his health, if ſhe had been capable of attending ſeriouſly to any thing but herſelf. Celeſtina, to whom he behaved with more diſtant reſerve than ever, could not be inſenſible or ſilent about a health and life which ought ſhe thought to be ſo pre-

cious to his ſiſter and his friends, and therefore ſhe ſpoke to Matilda, when they retired after ſupper, of the change ſo evident in her brother. Matilda anſwered coldly that it was owing to nothing but his burying himſelf as he did among his books, and loſing all reliſh for other company. "I wiſh," added ſhe, "that theſe Fitz-Haymans were come over, that he might live in the world again, and be like other people, which he muſt be when he is married." Celeſtina could not heartily join in this wiſh, and even doubted whether Willoughby ever would be quite like thoſe who were called "other people" by his ſiſter. She dropped the converſation however, and retired to her pillow with more ſolicitude for the happineſs of Matilda, which was to be determined the next day, than Matilda was capable of feeling for herſelf. The image of Willoughby, ſuch as he was a few years before, was ſtrongly painted by her imagination: ſhe ran over all their former early pleaſures; their

walks,

walks, their reading, their gardening together at Alveſtone while yet children; then Willoughby, ſuch as he now was, ſo amiable yet ſo changed, obtruded himſelf on her mind; and being unable to look forward with any degree of pleaſure, ſhe felt with redoubled ſorrow that thoſe days of innocent confidence and ingenuous tenderneſs, could never—never return!

CHAPTER III.

WHEN the party met the next day, every body had left off their mourning, and every face appeared cheerful but thoſe of Willoughby and Celeſtina: the latter, when gaily rallied by the friends of Mr. Molyneux, endeavoured to recover her tranquillity; and as to Matilda herſelf ſhe gave away her hand with as much eaſe as if it was a matter of courſe. Molyneux received it with equal compoſure; and as ſoon as they were married, they ſat out, accompanied only by Celeſtina and Mr. Hamilton, a near relation of the bride-groom's, for an houſe which Mr. Molyneux rented in Hampſhire. Willoughby ſaluted his ſiſter; and as he handed her into the coach he again wiſhed her happineſs. It was impoſſible to avoid doing the ſame

as

as Celeſtina paſſed him, but he faultered, and could hardly articulate his compliment, which while he was tremulouſly attempting to expreſs, holding one of her hands between his, Mr. Hamilton, who had been detained by giving ſome orders to his ſervant, came up, and taking her other hand ſaid—"Come, come! as you don't go with us, Willoughby, the care of this lady devolves upon me, and I ſhall not allow theſe ſorrowful partings to make her as melancholy as you are yourſelf all her journey." Celeſtina was then unreſiſtingly led away; while Willoughby, who followed her to the coach door, found at that moment his heart aſſailed by pangs it had never felt before, but which he knew too well to be jealouſy in its moſt corroſive form. As the coach drove away, he ſtood looking after it; now repenting that he had not accompanied his ſiſter and her huſband into Hampſhire, then determining to order his horſe and follow them; now deteſting Hamilton, of whom he had never thought before, and then reſolving to conquer a

paſſion which a thouſand circumſtances made it the height of folly to indulge. The coach which contained the object of it was already out of ſight; but Willoughby ſtill ſtood on the ſpot from whence it had been driven, ſo loſt in the indulgence of theſe ſenſations, that he forgot where he was, and was rouſed from his reverie only by the arrival of a friend with whom he had made an appointment to go in his chaiſe part of the way to Cambridge.

This friend he was aſhamed to diſappoint, nor could he form any excuſe to account for his ſuddenly changing his mind and following his ſiſter, whom he had ſteadily declined to accompany under pretence of urgent engagements. While he yet debated, the chaiſe was ready, and with an heart torn with contending paſſions, and a mind intent only on Celeſtina and the advantage Hamilton enjoyed of being ſo long with her, as during the ſtay of Molyneux in Hampſhire and in the tour they were afterwards to make, he proceeded,

abſent,

abſent, ſilent, and miſerable, to the end of his journey.

Celeſtina with equal oppreſſion of ſpirits was yet more unfortunate, becauſe ſhe was afraid of enquiring too narrowly into the ſource of her concern, nor did ſhe dare to indulge it, but was compelled to aſſume cheerfulneſs very foreign to her feelings. Mr. Hamilton, who had never taken much notice of her before, now ſeemed diſpoſed to amuſe himſelf by coquetting with her; but ſhe had ſo little inclination to encourage him, that, as he was too perfectly a man of the world to give himſelf much trouble about any woman, he ſoon left her to her own amuſements. In a few days after the bride and bridegroom arrived at their houſe, it was filled with company; and Matilda, wholly occupied with parties all the morning, and play in the evening, had never time to think of Celeſtina, who ſoon found herſelf neglected by the only perſon whom ſhe could now call her friend; and the diſappointment which ſtill

ſat ſo heavy on her heart—the failure, as ſhe believed, of Willoughby's regard—was now embittered by the coldneſs or rather careleſsneſs which ſhe experienced from his ſiſter.

In a few weeks a party was made to viſit Plymouth and the Weſtern bathing places. Celeſtina went with them as a matter of courſe, but ſhe felt herſelf dwindling faſt into the humiliating character of a dependent companion, and ſometimes fancied that her place in the coach might have been occupied by another more to the ſatisfaction of her friend: yet Mrs. Molyneux was never rude to her; and ſometimes related (with apparent kindneſs) how her mother had adopted her from a convent, and that therefore ſhe ever ſhould conſider her as a ſiſter. Celeſtina always felt herſelf more mortified than gratified by theſe relations; and by degrees they became ſo irkſome to her, and the whole ſtyle of converſation among Matilda's friends ſo little to her taſte, that ſhe inſenſibly acquired

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an habit of abſenting herſelf, and of living very much alone either in her own room or in the walks which wherever the party fixed ſhe contrived to find, and whither the image of Willoughby, ſuch as it had been at a very early period of her life impreſſed on her young heart, inceſſantly accompanied her. This was more particularly the caſe, when in the courſe of their tour Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux undertook to ſhew their friends Alveſtone, where Willoughby had ordered every thing to be prepared for their reception as if he had been himſelf there. Matilda re-viſited this beautiful place with no other emotions than thoſe of gratified pride; but on Celeſtina it had a very different effect: this was the ſcene where the happieſt hours of her life had paſſed. The dreſſing room where they all uſed to aſſemble when the only parent ſhe had known was its miſtreſs, brought her forcibly to the recollection of Celeſtina. The chair on which ſhe uſed to ſit, the furniture which ſhe had worked

herſelf, and the pictures ſhe had collected, were ſo many memorials on which Celeſtina could not look without recollecting a thouſand inſtances of her general goodneſs or her particular tenderneſs, and feeling with bitter regret the irreparable loſs ſhe had ſuſtained. The park and the gardens too furniſhed her with many ſources of painful contemplation, mingled however with a degree of melancholy ſo ſoothing, that nothing would have been to her ſo great a puniſhment as being obliged to exchange it for the deſultory and unintereſting converſation, which, in the little time ſpared from the card table, engaged the party within the houſe.

The party however troubled themſelves very little with her; and ſhe was left at liberty to retrace the walks which ſhe had ſo often traverſed with Willoughby while Matilda leaned on one arm and ſhe on the other, and to gaze on the proſpects which he, while yet a boy, had pointed out to them with ſo much pleaſure. She remembered

bered all the propoſed improvements of which he delighted to talk. A rapid ſtream burſting from the hollow of a rocky common that bounded the park, and made its way through it, had been by the former Mr. Willoughby widened at a great expence, and now fell ſeveral feet into a vale which he had at a ſtill greater coſt, floated with water. On the ſides of this fall, which had been formerly part of the common, grew ſome old oaks and beech, and among theſe the mountain aſh and weeping birch had been planted and now ſpread their various foliage and half concealed the water that daſhed from rock to rock between them. Theſe ſteep banks had ever been the favourite ſeats of Willoughby; who there ſitting between his two ſiſters, and holding each of their hands, had very frequently amuſed himſelf with projects to encreaſe the roar of the water or deepen the ſhade of the wood that fringed it's ſide. This place was the daily reſort of Celeſtina during the week ſhe remained at Alveſtone,

and thither ſhe uſually carried ſome of thoſe books from the library that ſhe remembered Willoughby had read to her. Theſe were principally poetry: and the reperuſal of them, the place, the ſeaſon, a thouſand tender remembrances enforced by each, ſerved at once to ſoften and depreſs an heart naturally tender and affectionate, which, deprived of almoſt every other object of it's regard, cheriſhed with painful pleaſure the idea of Willoughby, ſuch as he once was, and when they paſſed here ſo many innocent enchanting hours. But when ſhe imagined that in a few months he would probably re-viſit theſe ſcenes with another, with Miſs Fitz Hayman, who would then be his wife, and that ſhe herſelf ſhould never again be admitted to wander among them with their beloved maſter, ſick deſpondence took poſſeſſion of her ſoul, and it was with difficulty after theſe reflections that ſhe could reaſſume courage enough to mix with the friends whom Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux had aſſembled:

bled to liſten to inſipid pleaſantry and attend to unintereſting converſation.

But whatever regret Celeſtina felt in recollecting paſt hours of felicity which ſhe knew could never return, ſhe left Alveſtone with extreme reluctance, and had it been proper, or poſſible, would moſt willingly have remained there alone. In quitting it never to return, ſhe felt almoſt as much concern as ſhe had done when in taking leave of Willoughby ſhe fancied that ſhe ſhould ſee him no more till he was married to Miſs Fitz-Hayman.

Of that match Mrs. Molyneux now very frequently ſpoke as a matter entirely ſettled, and Celeſtina no longer doubted of it's ſpeedy completion. This circumſtance, (which gave her uneaſineſs that ſhe was unable either to repreſs or entirely to diſguiſe), the encreaſing indifference of Matilda towards her, and the conſtant ſucceſſion of company in which Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux lived, united to raiſe in her a wiſh to quit them; and finding that the hints,

hints ſhe gave of ſuch a diſpoſition were received with perfect careleſsneſs, and that ſuch a removal would probably not be objected to, ſhe every day grew fonder of her project, and during their ſtay at Sidmouth fixed on a cottage about four miles from it, where ſhe thought ſhe might reſide, if not happily at leaſt in that quiet obſcurity which her circumſtances rendered prudent, and her diſtaſte to the world in which ſhe now lived, pleaſant. She found that ſhe could there be accommodated with board and lodging, and there ſhe would now have remained if Mrs. Molyneux had not, when ſhe underſtood her project, inſiſted on her returning to London with her after finiſhing their tour.—"Go with me, however," ſaid ſhe, "the reſt of our journey, and till we meet the Caſtlenorths, who are to be in town in October; and then if you have this rural paſſion ſtill ſo ſtrong upon you, you ſhall take your own way." Though there was little appearance of affection in this invitation,

tation, Celeſtina thought ſhe ought not to decline it, and therefore, though meeting the Caſtlenorths was what ſhe moſt ſolicitouſly wiſhed to avoid, ſhe determined to go with her friend to town, that ſhe might not give her any pretence for forgetting her entirely, or incur the cenſure of the world for leaving abruptly the only protection ſhe could claim.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.

THE return of Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux to London was poſtponed from time to time till November. Lord Caſtlenorth had been too ill to ſet out on his journey to England at the time he propoſed, and the family meeting which was to ſettle all that related to the marriage was now delayed till after Chriſtmas. Willoughby however teſtified no impatience: he had promiſed to meet his ſiſter and her huſband in town on their arrival; but inſtead of doing ſo, he ſent ſuch an inſufficient excuſe as muſt have appeared very ſtrange to Matilda had ſhe thought much about it; but immerſed in pleaſures and purſuits of her own, ſhe gave herſelf very little time to reflect on her brother's conduct, and was far from ſuppoſing that he abſented himſelf

ſelf becauſe he could not ſee Celeſtina without encreaſing and confirming a paſſion which he had many reaſons againſt indulging, and of which he was determined to cure himſelf by abſence and reflection. The negociation with his uncle, which had been carried ſo far by his mother, he neither declined nor forwarded; but ſuffered it to remain nearly on the footing ſhe had left it, flattering himſelf that by the time Miſs Fitz-Hayman arrived in London, he ſhould have ſo far conquered his early attachment as to have an heart as well as the hand, which he had promiſed to his mother's entreaties, to offer her.

Though his endeavours to forget Celeſtina had hitherto been quite unſucceſsful, he had however acquired ſo much reſolution as to determine not to ſee her, till the arrival of his deſtined wife, and the final ſettlement of every thing that related to his marriage, ſhould put it out of his power to break the engagement he had made to Mrs. Willoughby in her laſt hours, and to ſacrifice every thing to his paſſion. The

ſtruggle

ſtruggle he underwent however was dreadful, and by continually repeating to himſelf the neceſſity there was for his forgetting Celeſtina, he ſo accuſtomed himſelf to think of her, that he in reality ſoon ceaſed to think with intereſt of any body elſe; and though he endeavoured to perſuade himſelf that he ſhould have courage to acquit himſelf of what he tried to think his duty to his family, to his mother's memory, and himſelf, there was no intelligence he ſo much dreaded as that of the arrival of his uncle's family in England.

Celeſtina on her part, paſſed her time in a way very unpleaſant to her. Mrs. Molyneux, now miſtreſs of herſelf, plunged into unceaſing diſſipation; and as Celeſtina was frequently deſired to accompany her, and always to make one of the parties ſhe collected at her own houſe, ſhe found that the expences of dreſs alone would greatly exceed the income of her little fortune, and that ſhe ſhould ſoon exhauſt it to live among people whoſe ſociety gave her no pleaſure,

pleaſure, and who for the moſt part conſidered her only as ſhe was capable of filling up a table or the corner of a coach when it was vacant. Her quickneſs of apprehenſion and extreme ſenſibility made her too frequently remark, that the table or the coach might in the apprehenſion of Matilda always be as well, and ſometimes better filled; and theſe obſervations, together with her growing diſlike to Mr. Molyneux, and the people with whom he aſſociated, who not unfrequently treated her with the impertinent familiarity which they thought themſelves at liberty to uſe towards Mrs. Molyneux's *companion*, renewed, before ſhe had been ſix weeks in town, her wiſh to quit them for ever, and to enjoy in her own way the ſmall independence given her by her lamented benefactreſs.

The certainty that Miſs Fitz-Hayman was ſo ſoon to become the wife of the only man for whom ſhe ever had felt the leaſt degree of partiality, haſtened the execution of her project. She now heard every day

of

of the great beauty, the extraordinary accompliſhments, and the immenſe fortune of the future bride, while Mrs. Molyneux was exerciſing her fancy on the equipages, and other preparations which were ſo ſoon to be on foot for the wedding of her brother; a ſubject that Celeſtina always liſtened to with impatience, which, though ſhe with difficulty concealed it from others, ſhe was painfully conſcious of herſelf. The eternal harangues of Mrs. Molyneux on taſte and elegance had always been fatiguing to her, but ſhe was more than uſually diſguſted when the purpoſe of theſe lectures was to decide upon or to deſcribe the bridal fineries intended for Willoughby and Miſs Fitz-Hayman.

A letter now arrived from Lady Caſtlenorth announcing her intentions of being in London with her Lord and her daughter the following week; and at this intelligence Celeſtina, no longer heſitating, wrote to the perſon near Sidmouth, to whom ſhe had ſpoken the preceding ſummer; and finding

finding ſhe could be immediately received at the lodging ſhe had then looked at, ſhe packed up and ſent by the waggon the ſmall collection of books given her by Mrs. Willoughby, which with her cloaths and the legacy veſted in the funds, were all her worldly poſſeſſions; and that evening after ſupper, when by a chance very unuſual with them Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux were without company, ſhe declared her intentions of going into the country the next day.

Mr. Molyneux, twirling about a wine glaſs and humming a tune, ſeemed to attend very little to the information; his wife, after hearing it with almoſt equal indifference, ſaid—"I cannot imagine, my dear, why you think of going into the country now, or what you propoſe by it."

"Nothing more," replied Celeſtina, piqued at the coldneſs of her manner, "than to accuſtom myſelf at once to a mode of life which my narrow fortune renders,

ders, if not abſolutely neceſſary, at leaſt highly prudent."

"Prudence," cried Molyneux with a ſmile which Celeſtina thought a contemptuous one, "is an acquiſition very unuſual at eighteen: but a girl of ſpirit, with ſo pretty a perſon as your's is, ſhould be rather ambitious than prudent, and ſhould try to make her fortune by marriage inſtead of hiding herſelf in the country. Numberleſs young women about town have done extremely well, who, without any compliment, have not had your ſhare of beauty."

"Very poſſibly, Sir," replied Celeſtina; "but unleſs my mind was diſpoſed as their minds probably were, which I believe it never will be, the perſonal advantages you ſo flatteringly allow me, will never obtain the affluence you think ſo deſirable."

"What do you mean to ſay?" anſwered he. "What! do you pretend that you would not marry as other women do for money or title?"

"For neither, upon my honour."

"Pooh!

"Pooh! I thought you had more ſenſe; but ſince it is ſo, my dear Celeſtina, I wiſh you all poſſible felicity in your new plan of paſtoral amuſement, and doubt not but that ſome tender and amiable Philander, in the ſhape of a young weſt country curate, will enable you to realize to your heart's content all your ideas of diſintereſted love and rural happineſs."

Molyneux then ſauntered away, and his lady looking in a pocket mirror, and picking her teeth with the niceſt care, took up the argument.

"You know, Celeſtina, that I have the greateſt regard in the world for you, and that I have argued with you for ever about this nonſenſical reſolution, which I cannot imagine what put into your head. You will be tired to death, child, in the country at this time of the year. However if you will go, do ſtay here at leaſt till after my brother is married. We ſhall have half the world with us then, and I ſhall want you for twenty things."

At

At the mention of Willoughby's marriage, Celeſtina, though ſo much accuſtomed to hear of it, changed colour, and her voice as well as her look might have betrayed the uneaſy ſenſations ſhe felt, if Mrs. Molyneux had not been always too much occupied by herſelf to attend very narrowly to another.

"Pardon me, dear Madam," ſaid Celeſtina, "I certainly cannot be wanted on that occaſion. You will have ſo many other friends about you that I ſhall not be miſſed; and I have no right, indeed I never had any, to be upon an equality with the perſons who will then be aſſembled about you. Let me therefore find my own place in ſociety, and learn at once to ſubmit to it."

After ſome other converſation, Celeſtina, ſtill unwilling to appear in the ſlighteſt degree ungrateful for paſt kindneſs or too impatient of her preſent ſituation, agreed to ſtay another week in town; and retired to her own room relieved by having thus declared

declared her intentions, and fixed the time when her preſent uneaſy ſtate of dependance would be at an end.

But of this delay ſhe repented, when the next day notice was received by Mrs. Molyneux of the arrival of Lord and Lady Caſtlenorth at their houſe in Groſvenor-ſtreet. Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux inſtantly waited on them; the next evening they were to return the viſit in form; and thus Celeſtina was compelled to be preſent at a meeting ſhe had been ſtudiouſly endeavouring to avoid.

Lord Caſtlenorth was one of thoſe unfortunate beings, who have been brought up never to have a wiſh unprevented or a want ungratified. He was born when his father was far advanced in life, the ſole heir to one of the moſt ancient* families and opulent fortunes in England; and was

* Fitz Hayman, Earl of Gloceſter, came in with the Conqueror, the heireſs of which family married a natural ſon of Henry I. by Neſta, daughter of Rhees Prince of South Wales.

of ſo much conſequence, that till he was near eighteen he was hardly ever ſuffered out of the ſight of his father. He was then releaſed by death from the officious affection which had long been very troubleſome to him; and with every thing on his ſide but a good conſtitution, he ſat out on a wild career of pleaſure, in which, before he had materially hurt his fortune, he was ſtopped by the apprehenſion of declining health. His figure was one of thoſe which look as if

"The blaſts of January would blow them thro' and thro';"

and the irregularities of his life had ſo much impaired a habit naturally weak, that at thirty he was a mere ſhadow, and then was told by his phyſicians that he muſt reſolve on a reſidence of ſome time in the South of Europe if he would avoid going to that country "from whoſe bourn no traveller returns:" to which having an invincible averſion, he loſt not a moment

ment in complying with their advice. But as he ſoon recovered ſome degree of health, he grew every day leſs attentive to injunctions they had given as to his manner of life; and relapſing into his former indiſcretions, he was again reduced to extremities, and when very little hope of his life remained, was recommended by one of his medical friends in London to put himſelf under the care of Dr. Maclaurin, a Scottiſh phyſician, who had been ſettled for two or three years at Naples with his wife and family.

There he was treated with the moſt aſſiduous attention, not only by the Doctor himſelf but by Mrs. Maclaurin and her daughter, then near thirty, who was ſo reaſonable as to allow herſelf to be five and twenty. She was tall, and had a tolerable face, with which her ambition to be admired, ſuffered her not to be content in it's natural ſtate. She had been brought up to attend moſt ſedulouſly to her own intereſt, and to purſue the eſtabliſhment of her

fortune by marriage: ſhe had therefore learned early to fawn and flatter; and to the cunning of her mother united ſome portion of the abilities of her father. Mrs. Maclaurin was one of that ſpecies of beings who are by courteſy denominated good ſort of women. All her virtues were negative; and of the few vices ſhe had it in her power to practiſe, ſhe contented herſelf with malice and defamation, and even in thoſe ſhe never indulged herſelf unleſs very certain that the objects were incapable of retort and totally defenceleſs. She had now however but little opportunity of gratification; for though ſhe had lived three years in Italy, ſhe underſtood not a word of the language, and her attempts to amend the world being therefore made, in one not underſtood by thoſe in whoſe favor they were exerted, were very little comprehended, and of courſe failed of affording her much ſatisfaction. Her talents being thus perforce confined to her own houſhold, had taken another turn, and had been applied

plied to the acquiſition of money, and of ſecuring a good match for her daughter.

The Doctor, though really a man of ſome abilities, had not hitherto been ſucceſsful enough in his profeſſion to be enabled to give her a fortune: the project of marrying her well was equally intereſting to him; and among the various patients he had received into his houſe ſince he reſided at Naples, the elder ſon of a very opulent merchant in London, and an old Baronet, who had ſeveral daughters older than Miſs Maclaurin, very narrowly eſcaped her multiform attractions by the impertinent remonſtrances of their families.

Lord Caſtlenorth had no relations but Mrs. Willoughby, who was very unlikely to interfere in any matrimonial project; he had beſides a much larger fortune, and was of a much higher rank, than any of thoſe for whom the family of Maclaurin had intended the honor of their alliance; but the very circumſtances which rendered the proſpect of ſuch a marriage moſt alluring,

ſeemed to preclude the probability of ſucceſs.

Among the few things Lord Caſtlenorth had learned of his father, the principal was to value himſelf on his deſcent; and, as far as related to his own family, he was a genealogiſt almoſt as ſoon as he could ſpeak. As he advanced in life, he found himſelf of ſo little conſequence for individual merit, that he was compelled to avail himſelf of the names of his anceſtors, from whom only he derived any importance at all; and the "puny inſect ſhivering at a breeze," ſwelled with conſcious pride when he recited the names of heroes from whom he had ſo woefully degenerated.

This pride of anceſtry was now the moſt diſtinguiſhing feature in a character where it appeared with the greateſt prominence, from the faintneſs and inſipidity of the other traits, for being no longer able to purſue the diſſolute manner of life which he had adopted rather from faſhion than inclination,

clination, he had now in other reſpects no character at all.

Miſs Maclaurin, who began to ſtudy him as ſoon as he was received by her father ſoon ſaw it, and ſaw it with diſmay; for ſhe ſuppoſed that it would be an inſuperable bar to thoſe hopes, which ſhe thought ſhe might otherwiſe very reaſonably entertain.

The Doctor however had too many reſources to be ſo eaſily diſcouraged. He fabricated with admirable ingenuity a ſtory, of which he juſtly ſuppoſed the ignorance and indolence of his patient would prevent his ever detecting the falſehood. He ſaid that he was really a Hamilton, and had taken his preſent name in compliance with the whim of a diſtant relation, who had on that condition given him his property. The only objection being thus removed, Miſs Maclaurin had a f ir field for her attractive talents; and they were ſo effectually exerted, that in about five months after Lord Caſtlenorth's reception into the

family of Maclaurin, he became himſelf a member of it, and Miſs Maclaurin returned to England as his wife.

That her father might ſtill retain, without too ſcrupulous an enquiry, his relationſhip to the houſe of Hamilton, and that her mother's coarſe figure and coarſer manners might be no diſgrace to Lady Caſtlenorth in the ſphere where ſhe now prepared to blaze, ſhe prevailed upon them to retire to their native country on a penſion which there gave them conſequence: while her Ladyſhip, who while ſhe was Miſs Maclaurin had nothing doubted of her own eminent perfections, was now ſo convinced of their irreſiſtible power by their having thus eſtabliſhed her in a ſituation ſo much above her hopes, that ſhe thought herſelf born for the government and amendment of the world, and from that period had been advancing in arrogance and oſtentation till the preſent hour; when at the age of fifty, with an unweildy perſon and a broad face, where high cheek bones appeared

emulous

emulous of giving ſome protection to two grey prominent eyes, whoſe lids ſeemed inadequate to ſhade them, Lady Caſtlenorth was as well by her rank as her talents and her travels, qualified in her own opinion for univerſal dominion. Not content therefore with governing her Lord with deſpotic ſway, (which indeed ſaved him the trouble and probably the diſgrace of governing himſelf) ſhe aſſumed towards the reſt of the world a ſtyle equally dictatorial. Her opinion was ſtrongly enforced on every topic that came before her; in private anecdote, in public debates, in literature, in politics, in faſhions, ſhe was equally omniſcient; and whether the converſation ran on taxes or on taſte, in laying out grounds or on ſetting out a dinner, in making a peace or a poem, ſhe underſtood all, deſcanted on all, and could decide on all, in a way from which few of her auditors had at the moment courage to appeal.

By the ſide of this majeſtic figure, her

Lord, the deſcendant of the old Earls of Glouceſter, of Welſh Princes and Engliſh Kings, ſunk into inſignificance. His diminitive figure, now ſhrunk by age and ſickneſs, his ſallow and withered countenance, and his feeble ſtep, formed a decided contraſt to his robuſt and Juno-like lady, by whom he ſuffered himſelf to be led about, without ever pretending to diſſent from her opinion, unleſs in matters of heraldry or genealogy, where he ſtill ventured to take the lead, in which ſhe was for the moſt part willing to indulge him. His Lordſhip's ill health had made him alſo converſant in phyſic; a ſcience in which, notwithſtanding her hereditary claim to it, Lady Caſtlenorth had not ſhewn much diſpoſition to contend with him: but as there was more trouble and diſguſt than honour to be obtained by a conſtant attention to it, as applied to his real or imaginary complaints, ſhe had very frequently delegated her authority, and at length quite relinquiſhed her knowledge, to a relation,

relation, who being a widow (and ſaid to poſſeſs a pretty fortune though nobody ever knew where it lay) now about ſix and forty, had with infinite philanthropy dedicated her days to relieve the infirmities of her fellow creatures without any other advantage than that of being received in turn at their houſes. She knew every receipt, whether of diet or medicine, that could be named, as preventative or cure; underſtood the preparation of every quack remedy, and the qualities of all the drugs of which they are compounded: nor was ſhe leſs acquainted with the human frame; and would in all companies give the hiſtory of any complaint to which it is ſubject in technical terms, to the wonder of ſome and the terror of many hearers. Such were the manners of Mrs. Calder; and her perſon was one of thoſe, which but for their ſingularity, nobody would ever recollect as having ſeen at all. She now reſided almoſt conſtantly with Lord and Lady Caſtlenorth, to both of whom ſhe had contrived.

trived to render herſelf neceſſary. With them ſhe had been abroad, (where ſhe had greatly improved her ſtock of knowledge, and had actually written a treatiſe on the goitres of the Alpine peaſants, which Lady Caſtlenorth was poliſhing for publication,) and ſhe was now of the party who were aſſembled at Mrs. Molyneux's; where the laſt but not the leaſt in conſequence appeared alſo—the deſtined bride of Willoughby.

The claim of this young lady to eminent beauty, or to any thing more than a barely tolerable perſon, would certainly not have been allowed, had ſhe not been heireſs to the illuſtrious houſe of Fitz-Hayman; but the eſcutcheon of pretence, which ſhe had a right to, ſeemed to give her a pretence alſo, to much of what nature had very ſcantily allowed her. She was as tall and almoſt as large as her mother, whom ſhe greatly reſembled. Her complexion was brown, and as her hair was not dark, the want of contraſt produced a muddy and heavy effect,

effect, which nothing could have relieved but two dark eyes, whoſe powers were aſſiſted by a greater quantity of rouge than unmarried ladies are even by the French cuſtoms uſually allowed. What expreſſion they naturally had however was not pleaſing, and what they borrowed from this addition added more to their fierceneſs than their luſtre. They were eyes of "high claims and expectations," which demanded rather than ſolicited admiration, and ſignified pretty plainly the real diſpoſition of a character, inflated with ideas of it's own conſequence, and conſidering more than half the world as beings of another ſpecies, whoſe evils ſhe could not feel for, becauſe ſhe was placed where it was impoſſible ſhe could ever ſhare them.

To the perſonal arrogance of her mother, ſhe added the hereditary pride of her father: the firſt had taught her that hardly any man could deſerve ſo perfect and accompliſhed a creature; the ſecond, that it was more deſirable to unite herſelf with Willoughby,

Willoughby, and thus continue her own illuſtrious race, than loſe or ſhare her conſequence by marrying a nobleman of ſuperior rank. Some degree of perſonal partiality too, contributed to render this reſolution more pleaſing to her; for though ſhe had not ſeen her couſin for between three and four years, his graceful and beautiful form when he left Eton, with his dark auburn hair flowing over his ſhoulders, had made a very laſting impreſſion in his favor.

CHAP.

CHAPTER V.

SUCH was the group, which, at a very late hour in the evening, entered the dining-room of Mrs. Molyneux, who, with her huſband and Celeſtina, received them in the uſual forms. Lady Caſtlenorth, as uſual, took the lead in converſation, having firſt ſatisfied herſelf that Mrs. Molyneux had ſent for Willoughby, and heard her aſſurances that he would certainly be in town the firſt moment he poſſibly could after hearing of the arrival of his noble relations.

"What ſort of taſte, my dear," cried her Ladyſhip to Mrs. Molyneux, "is this apartment fitted up in?—Is this the preſent ſtyle in England?—I think it extremely ugly."

This was trenching on Matilda in a very tender point. Taſte was her reigning foible;

ble; and the houſe had, on her recent marriage, been fitted up under her directions at an immenſe expence. To have her elegance called ſo abruptly in queſtion, therefore, was very far from being pleaſant, and ſhe anſwered coldly—"I am ſorry you diſlike it: it is, I believe, the neweſt ſtyle of doing rooms. To what does your Ladyſhip object?"

"Oh, to the whole. Theſe ſort of papers are unclaſſical and glaring: I don't like the colour of your furniture neither."

"Nor I," interrupted Mrs. Calder; "'tis terrible for the eyes: does not your Lordſhip find it dazzling and inconvenient even by candle light?" She then began to explain the effect of glaring and ſtrong colours on the viſual orb, when Lady Caſtlenorth, who had no intention to throw the converſation into her hands, turned abruptly towards Celeſtina, of whom ſhe had hitherto taken no notice, and ſaid, looking ſteadily at her while ſhe addreſſed Mrs. Molyneux, "That, I think, is the young woman whom your

your late mother *ſaid* ſhe took out of a convent ſomewhere in France, is it not?" Mrs. Molyneux anſwering in the affirmative, Lady Caſtlenorth, her eyes ſtill fixed on the object of her enquiry, ſaid, "Aye, I thought I recollected her:—Umph!—and ſo Mrs. Willoughby provided for her, did ſhe?—Well! and is ſhe to live on with you, as ſhe did in your mother's time?"

"Only a few days longer, Madam," ſaid Celeſtina, who had borne very impatiently this rude and unfeeling ſcrutiny; "I am then going to reſide entirely in the country."

"I am glad of it, child," replied the lady; for I always conſider it as a misfortune when girls are educated above their fortune, and introduced into a ſtyle of life they have no pretenſions to. Indeed, I gave Mrs. Willoughby my opinion about you repeatedly in your infancy. I did not then know that her circumſtances allowed her, in juſtice to *her huſband*'s children, to provide ſo amply for another. However, though

though it was a great deal for her to do, it is not by any means a fortune to authoriſe you with prudence to continue to live about town. You took, I think, your Chriſtian name from the order of Nuns among whom you were reared; and your ſurname—I mean the name they gave you—it has eſcaped me?"

"My name, Madam," ſaid Celeſtina, whoſe tears were reſtrained only by indignation, "is De Mornay."

"True; I recollect it now. I remember I enquired of Mrs. Willoughby, whether when they gave you that name they had any reaſon to fancy you any way related to the family of the famous du Pleſſis Mornay; but I think ſhe told me no, and that you received that appellation becauſe the Superior to whoſe care you were entruſted had ſome fanciful partiality to the name."

To this no anſwer being given the converſation took another turn, but was ſtill engroſſed by Lady Caſtlenorth; while Mrs. Molyneux,

Molyneux, wearied to death, propoſed cards, and making a table with the noble pair, Mrs. Calder, and her huſband, ſhe ſat down herſelf by Miſs Fitz-Hayman, and endeavoured to enter into converſation with her.

Miſs Fitz-Hayman however, who never loved her couſin becauſe ſhe had heard her reckoned handſome, and who was out of humour to find that Willoughby was not yet arrived, though there was barely time for him to have come expreſs, received all her advances with more than her uſual haughty indifference; and while ſhe anſwered in ſhort ſentences or mere monoſyllables, ſhe now examined with looks of diſlike the ſtudied but becoming dreſs of Mrs. Molyneux, now, with yet more unpleaſant expreſſion, glanced with averted head, from the corners of her eyes, on Celeſtina, who, without any ſtudy at all was infinitely more beautiful.

Theſe ſcowling looks of mingled malignity and contempt, added to the behaviour of

of Lady Caſtlenorth towards her, had by this time rendered the room ſo diſagreeable to her, that ſhe left it as ſoon as ſhe could. A loud rap at the door however ſoon after announced the arrival of other viſitors; and ſome ladies coming in who had finiſhed their circle of viſits for that evening, Mrs. Molyneux, as tired of the daughter's ſilence as ſhe had before been of the mother's loquacity, propoſed a table at *vingt un*, which Celeſtina was immediately deſired to join.

The party were hardly placed at it, before Mr. Molyneux was informed by his own ſervant that Mr. Willoughby was below and aſked to ſpeak to him. "Deſire him to come up," replied he, without any ſeeming conſciouſneſs of the formidable nature of the interview he was to go through.

"He is in boots, Sir," replied the ſervant, "and deſired me to ſay that he is going immediately to his lodgings."

"Oh, but we ſhall not let him go," ſaid Molyneux. "Do, Mrs. Molyneux," continued

continued he, addreſſing himſelf to his wife, "do go down and bring up this brother of your's."

Mrs. Molyneux roſe and left the room. Lady Caſtlenorth, ſtill appearing to attend to her game, turned her fiercely-queſtioning eyes, firſt on her daughter, (who might have bluſhed if her complexion had been calculated to ſhew the ſuffuſion of blood,) and then unluckily they were attracted by the more unequivocal and deep roſe colour, which for a moment took poſſeſſion of the face of Celeſtina, who ſat next to her.

There was no time to comment on this appearance before it was heightened by the entrance of Willoughby, who was immediately led by his ſiſter to Lord Caſtlenorth, then to her Ladyſhip, and at length to Miſs Fitz-Hayman. He paid his compliments to all with his uſual graceful manners, but not without an expreſſion of pain and embarraſſment in his countenance, which he ſeemed vainly trying to ſhake off. He had yet diſtinguiſhed nobody in the room

room but thoſe to whom he had been ſpeaking; but on recovering from the low bow he had made to Miſs Fitz-Hayman, he ſaw Celeſtina; and ſtarting, he ſaid in a hurrying way—" Miſs De Mornay! I thought you had left my ſiſter! I hope I ſee you well!" Celeſtina anſwered only by a curtſey; and Willoughby, turning away towards Mrs. Molyneux, told her that he was a good deal fatigued, and muſt beg her to excuſe him for the reſt of the evening, but that he would be with her the following morning to breakfaſt. " Your Lordſhip," added he, turning to his uncle, " will perhaps allow me to pay my reſpects to you and Lady Caſtlenorth in the courſe of the morning:" then without waiting for the reply which his Lordſhip was in great form waiting to give him, he hurried out of the room, and the card tables very ſoon afterwards broke up.

Though Willoughby was very much altered ſince Miſs Fitz-Hayman had laſt ſeen him, the change appeared greatly in his

his favour. His undreſs, and the agitation he was apparently in, which ſhe imputed to the effect of her charms, combined to make him appear more intereſting both to the mother and daughter; and as they went home, Lord Caſtlenorth, who grew every day fonder of the propoſed marriage, ſpoke much in praiſe of his nephew's figure and manner. He has a great deal, ſaid he, of the family countenance. He ſtrikes me, indeed, he always did from a boy, as reſembling greatly the picture painted on board of William, ſon of Robert Fitz-Hayman, Seneſchal to Henry II. who obtained the grants of the eſtate in Glouceſterſhire. His arms were azure, a lion rampant, gardant or; the original bearing of the family; you ſee it ſo in the great window of the hall at Caſtlenorth: the next is that of his wife, party per pale, two griffins counter ſailant, ſable, langued gules. This is my firſt quarter for the name of Bigot, a daughter of which houſe, this

this William, ſon of Robert, married." Lord Caſtlenorth was now got on his favourite topic, and in the numberleſs quarterings of his preſent bearing, he quite forgot the merits of his nephew, and was buſied among wyverns and boars, pearls, ſaltiers, feſſes and bend dexters, till they arrived at their own houſe. The imaginations however of the reſt of the company finding nothing to arreſt them in a detail ſo often repeated, had all left him to ſettle his chevrons and chevronels his own way; even the attentive and complaiſant Mrs. Calder was conſidering whether a lady in the company they had left, who had related her complaints to her, was in a right courſe of medicine; Lady Caſtlenorth was laying up a little magazine of literature, which ſhe intended to open on Willoughby the next day; and her daughter was contemplating in her mind's eye, the handſome perſon of Willoughby, the figure they ſhould make at Court, and the triumph

umph there would be, when without degrading herſelf, by an unequal alliance in point of family, ſhe ſhould notwithſtanding carry to her huſband ſo ſplendid a fortune, and titles ſo ancient and illuſtrious.

CHAPTER VI.

THE party the noble viſitors had left were very differently employed: Mrs. Molyneux, almoſt always accuſtomed to be heard with attention and ſubmitted to with deference as a beauty and a woman of exquiſite taſte, was piqued and offended by the air of ſuperior intelligence aſſumed by Lady Caſtlenorth, who treated her like a child that knew nothing. Miſs Fitz-Hayman too had not expreſſed any admiration at her dreſs and figure, but had viewed her with ſupercilious ſilence; while Mrs. Calder, from knowing her to be a young married woman, had with more curioſity than elegance enquired whether ſhe was likely to give the Molyneux family the heir ſo much deſired by the older part of

of it; a queſtion which extremely diſguſted her. Lord Caſtlenorth, (who had complimented her upon her perſon, particularly on her long Chineſe eyes, and the form of her face, which he ſaid was extremely like that of Gertrude Fitz-Hayman, ſome time Maid of Honor to Catharine of Arragon and afterwards Counteſs of Powis,) was, ſhe declared to Mr. Molyneux, the only tolerable creature of the party. "My uncle," ſaid ſhe, as ſoon as they were alone, "my uncle is a reaſonable being; but for the reſt! did you ever ſee a plainer woman than Miſs Fitz-Hayman? her cloaths might be French, but I am ſure ſhe looks abſolutely Dutch in them. It's really a misfortune at her time of life to be ſo large."

Molyneux careleſsly anſwered—"You ſee ſhe is ſenſible of the misfortune by her endeavours to conceal it: but 'tis more witty than wiſe, I think, to find fault with her. Willoughby *can ſee* I ſuppoſe as well as you can, and I don't think it very politic in you to give him your authority for

diſliking her. Let him marry her, and then hate and abuſe her as much as you will."

"Oh!" replied the lady, "I ſhall always deteſt her, and——"

"So I dare ſay will he," interrupted Molyneux; "but let them be once married, and all that is very immaterial to you: it is by no means ſo, that your brother cannot, till he does marry, pay the ſecond five thouſand pounds of your fortune, unleſs he ſells the Withcombe eſtate, which indeed the mortgagee is, as far as I can learn, very impatient to take poſſeſſion of with this charge upon it, which he will immediately pay off. You ſee that Willoughby has no choice—matrimony or the diſmembering his eſtates; and pray never put it into his head to heſitate." This affectionate brother in law then went to his own dreſſing room, and Mrs. Molyneux taking a candle, ſurveying herſelf in the great glaſs, and wondering how it was poſſible ſuch a figure and face could fail to attract

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tract universal admiration from all ages and sexes, retired to her bed.

The contemplations of poor Celestina, who had left them the moment the company dispersed, were much more painful. The sight of Willoughby, his surprize, and, as she thought, his displeasure at finding her still there, were as poisoned arrows in her breast. But the pride of conscious worth, aided by her disinterested affection for him, enabled her, though not to heal, yet to endure without weak complainings, the exquisite pain they inflicted, and to give her courage immediately to execute the design she had long formed of withdrawing herself from his sight for ever. It was now impossible for her to set out the next day, but that immediately following it she fixed for her departure; and after a night in which she enjoyed very little repose, she arose early in order to make the immediate preparations for her journey, which she determined, in order to save expence, to make in the Exeter stage.

As ſhe was deſirous of giving as little trouble as poſſible to Mr. Mulyneux's ſervants, who were all people of great conſequence and would any of them have thought ſuch a commiſſion degrading, ſhe determined to go herſelf into the city, where places were to be taken. It was yet ſo early when ſhe went down to execute this intention, that only the houſemaid was ſtirring, and the windows of the parlour only were opened: there Celeſtina ſat while the maid went into the kitchen to get her a glaſs of milk and water, which ſhe had aſked for; and while ſhe yet trifled with it, being indeed afraid to venture into the ſtreets till ſhe ſaw more people in them, ſhe heard the ſervant, who was at the door duſting the hall and ſteps, ſpeak to ſomebody who entered, and the inſtant afterwards Willoughby came into the room where ſhe was.

She aroſe trembling and amazed from her ſeat. "Miſs De Mornay," ſaid he, "ſo early prepared to go out?" Celeſtina anſwered

anſwered—" yes," and ſat down again. He laid down his hat on the ſide board; and as if he knew not what to ſay, went to the window.

Celeſtina ſat motionleſs; and Willoughby, after ſtanding there a moment, ſeemed aſhamed of his ſilence, yet afraid to ſpeak. He traverſed the room, mended the fire, and complaining of the cold, at length ventured to enquire of Celeſtina what induced her to venture out at ſo early an hour of ſo unpleaſant a morning? She replied calmly, for ſhe had by this time regained her compoſure, that ſhe had buſineſs in the city.

" Buſineſs in the city!" cried Willoughby; " and at this time of the day! Ah! Celeſtina! there was a time when you would not thus have anſwered my enquiry." He was going on, when Celeſtina interrupted him:

" There was indeed," ſaid ſhe, with a deep ſigh, " a time when you would not have made it."

"Not have made it!" anſwered he; "was I not then ever intereſted in all that concerned you, and was any action of your's indifferent to me?"

He faultered and ſtopped. "I was once ſimple enough to think ſo indeed," ſaid Celeſtina, "and in thoſe days of fortunate illuſion you certainly would have made no ſuch enquiry as the preſent, becauſe I ſhould then have done nothing of which you would not have known the motive, nor have taken any meaſure without the concurrence of my brother and my friend; but as you told me yourſelf—would I could forget it!—that it was no longer in your power to retain thoſe characters towards me, I am learning to forget that I ever was ſo happy as to fancy that no change in my ſituation, eſpecially a change for the worſe, could rob me of that regard ſo valuable always, ſo particularly valuable now!"

"Gracious heaven!" cried Willoughby, entirely thrown off his guard by her words and manner—"How have I acted, what have

have I said, to deserve this reproach from you Celestina? When we parted last——"

She again interrupted him—"Did we part like friends? like brother and sister?"

"No," replied he hastily; "but I tore myself from you like a man who sacrifices, to the performance of a fatal promise, his own happiness, and who is the victim of family pride and family necessity." This sentence was decisive. His resolution forsook him at once, and his long stifled affection burst through all the restraints he determined to lay on it. "Oh! Celestina!" continued he, "you whom I loved before I knew what it was to love! you whom I now adore with a passion too strong for my reason! do not, do not, I beseech you, aggravate my sufferings. I promised to my mother—and you know how well she deserved to be obeyed—I promised to unite myself with her niece; I promised to extirpate from my heart an inclination that even then I could not conceal. Rash and ridiculous promise! No, Celestina, it is

impoſſible for me to ceaſe loving you! All my behaviour, which you have thought cold and unfriendly, was a part I was acting in oppoſition to my real affections! I can ſuſtain it no longer: I cannot bear that you ſhould think of me with indifference: and yet—— Oh! my mother, what a cruel taſk have you impoſed on me! Celeſtina, pity me; I am more wretched than you can imagine!" His agitation now became too violent: he ſeized the hand of Celeſtina, and fervently kiſſed it, while her own ſenſations were ſuch as no language can deſcribe. That Willoughby loved her, that what ſhe had conſidered as indifference was owing to the ſtruggle between his duty and his tenderneſs, was tranſport ſuch as obliterated every other ſentiment. But this delirium laſted but a moment: her reaſon, her genuine affection for him, told her, that to indulge this tenderneſs was injurious to him, and ſhe determined to ſhew that ſhe could ſacrifice herſelf to his advantage, and that, contented

tented with his brotherly attachment, ſhe could reſign him to the fortunate Miſs Fitz-Hayman. The terms however in which ſhe declared this, the ſoftneſs of her voice, and her eyes filled with tears, were little calculated to reconcile Willoughby to the reſolution, which, after a long dialogue, ſhe urged him to adopt; ſhe aſſured him that whatever might be her own fate, ſhe ſhould never forgive herſelf were ſhe to be the means of his breaking a promiſe ſo ſolemnly given, and given at ſuch a time, to her dear deceaſed beneſactreſs. "No! my brother," ſaid ſhe, "ſhe is dead, but my obligations to her can never be annihilated; and what would become of me, were I ever to feel myſelf reproached for ingratitude to her memory, were I to deſtroy the fabric ſhe had raiſed for the happineſs of her beloved ſon, and to fancy that the ſpirit of my more than mother, which I now often invocate with conſcious pleaſure, ſhould, inſtead of beholding her Celeſtina with complacency not unſuited

to her preſent ſtate of happineſs, ſee her degraded into a ſelfiſh and unworthy being, who repays her benefits with the blackeſt ingratitude."

Willoughby, whoſe love, once ſuffered to obtain the advantage, now acquired more power every moment, combated theſe objections with very dangerous eloquence; telling Celeſtina that he had determined the evening before, on a ſight of Miſs Fitz-Hayman, who was inſupportable to him, to put an end to the negotiation, and ſay plainly to his uncle that it was impoſſible for him to fulfil an engagement in which his heart never had any ſhare. Celeſtina repreſented to him the ſituation of his fortune; the abſolute neceſſity there was for his marrying one who could repair its deficiency, and reſtore him to the ſplendid affluence of his anceſtors; but for this he talked of œconomy and ſimplicity, by which when they lived entirely at Alveſtone he ſhould be able to repair every thing; then for a moment indulging his vivid imagination in painting

painting the happineſs they ſhould enjoy there together, (images of felicity which reflected in ſtronger colours thoſe which Celeſtina had a thouſand times formed, though knowing they could never be realized,) he thought ſuddenly of the fatal promiſe he had given to his mother, and his heart ſeemed to ſhrink from the idea of breaking it to obtain even the higheſt human happineſs, which under ſuch circumſtances he felt would be daſhed with gall. He obtained however from Celeſtina, but not without difficulty, a promiſe that ſhe would lay aſide her intentions of going into the city that morning to prepare for her journey, of which he would not hear; and ſhe prevailed upon him to wait on Lord Caſtlenorth, as he had aſſured the family he would do: "Though wherefore ſhould I do it," ſaid he, "unleſs to put an end at once and for ever to all thoughts of this odious marriage."

"You ought ſurely," replied Celeſtina, "to wait on the brother of your mother tho'

no ſuch connection had been thought of: and no diſlike which you may have conceived to Miſs Fitz Hayman as your wife, ſhould induce you to forget what you owe to your uncle.

By arguments thus reaſonable, Celeſtina, while ſhe prevailed on Willoughby to do what was, he was forced to own, proper, would have rivetted his chains, if indeed they had not already been immoveable. The noble candour and diſintereſted generoſity of her ſoul, gave tenfold force to the charms of her perſon, which ſince he had laſt ſeen her, Willoughby, thought greatly improved: and the tenderneſs of her manner, the certainty of her affection for him, which ſhe tried to conceal with more kindneſs than ſucceſs, had altogether ſuch an effect on him, that nothing but the fatal promiſe which lay ſo heavy on his heart, could have prevented his marrying her immediately, in deſpite of every conſideration of prudence or family engagement.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE Celeſtina remained with Willoughby, the very tumult and agitation of her heart had ſuſtained her courage, and like a fever that lends momentary ſtrength to the patient it is deſtroying, this diſorder of her ſpirits had ſupported her againſt the flood of tenderneſs that overwhelmed her as ſoon as ſhe was alone. A conflict then began between her affection for him and her duty and gratitude towards the memory of his mother, which was almoſt too ſevere to be endured; but however ſoft her heart, her reaſon was equal to the taſk of checking a dangerous or guilty indulgence of that ſenſibility; and after long arguing with herſelf, ſhe found ſhe loved Willoughby better than every thing but his honor and his repoſe.

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The firſt, and too probably the ſecond, ſhe ſaw too plainly that he muſt forfeit, by yielding to an affection, which, circumſtanced as he was, would perhaps be as fatal to both as it certainly was to his pecuniary intereſt. She had heard Mr. Molyneux ſay, who had his reaſons for repeating it before her, that nothing but his marrying a woman as opulent as Miſs Fitz-Hayman could prevent his ſelling the greater part of his eſtates; "and in that caſe," added he, "I don't ſee how he can avoid diſpoſing of Alveſton too; for with the income he will then have, to think of keeping up ſuch a place as that, would be quite inſanity." Celeſtina knew that no blow could fall ſo heavy on the heart of Willoughby, as the cruel neceſſity of ſelling this his paternal ſeat; and though ſhe was flattered and delighted when he had juſt before declared to her, that to obtain her every deprivation would be eaſy, ſhe knew, while ſhe now more coolly reflected on it, his local attachment to be ſo ſtrong, that it

was

was very probable his love would ſoon yield to the regret which would ariſe from their ſacrifice. "What would become of me," ſaid ſhe as ſhe meditated on this matter, "were I to be the wife of Willoughby, and to ſee him unhappy that I was ſo? He would have broken his faith to his mother; he who has always been taught to hold the ſlighteſt promiſe ſacred; he would ſee his eſtate diſmembered; even Alveſton, the place he ſo loves, would paſs into the hands of ſtrangers, and it would be to me he would owe his indigence and his unhappineſs! How dare I ſuppoſe that my affection, warm and ſincere as it is, could make him any amends for all thoſe mortifications. Oh! let me not ſuppoſe it, nor ever think of riſking it. I can bear to quit him now—I believe I can—but how ſhould I endure to find myſelf the ſource of repentance to him! how ſhould I ever ſurvive ſeeing him decidedly unhappy, with the conſciouſneſs that he owed his being ſo to his partiality for me."

Theſe

Theſe reflections, and above all the obligation by which he had bound himſelf to obey the laſt injunctions of his mother, determined Celeſtina as to the conduct ſhe ought to adopt; and having once ſeen it by the light lent by integrity and diſintereſted love to her ſtrong and excellent underſtanding, ſhe haſtened to execute it, and certain that he was engaged for the reſt of the morning, ſhe had no ſooner breakfaſted than ſhe told Mrs. Molyneux ſhe was going to make ſome purchaſes for which ſhe had occaſion before ſhe left London, and getting into an hackney coach, was driven into the City, where ſhe ſecured a place in the Exeter ſtage, which was to leave London at a very early hour the next day. She returned to the houſe of Mrs. Molyneux about twelve o'clock, and then learned, that ſhe and her huſband were engaged to dine at Lord Caſtlenorth's, where a very large party were to aſſemble. In the card which Lady Caſtlenorth had ſent to invite them, no mention was made of

of Celeſtina, nor was any ſeparate card ſent to her. "It is mere forgetfulneſs I fancy," ſaid Mrs. Molyneux as ſhe mentioned it to her: "you will go however, as the ceremony of an invitation is not very material."

"Pardon me," replied Celeſtina, "it appears to me of ſo much conſequence in the preſent caſe, that I certainly ſhall not go without it. I am indeed very glad to be excuſed, and I am ſure you will not urge me to violate etiquette in a matter where to forbear doing it is ſo particularly deſirable."

Mrs. Molyneux, very ſolicitous about the contents of certain band boxes with which her woman entered at that moment, forbore to preſs her farther, and Celeſtina deſiring her to let her know when ſhe was dreſſed, that ſhe might ſee her before ſhe went, retired to her own room, leaving her friend to the pleaſing and important occupation of the toilet, in which half what is now called morning, was uſually paſſed by Matilda.

Celeſtina

Celeſtina had promiſed Willoughby to give up for that day her intention of fixing her journey; but this promiſe ſhe thought herſelf well juſtified in breaking. The entertainment at Lord Caſtlenorth's was given on his account: of courſe he would be engaged the whole day; and ſince ſhe muſt go, ſhe deſired nothing ſo much as to be ſpared the fruitleſs pain of a farther diſcuſſion of the ſubject, and the miſery, which ſhe was not ſure her reſolution would ſupport, of bidding him a laſt farewel.

At a little after five however, after ſhe had undergone the form of ſitting down alone to table, where ſhe eat nothing, and had then retired to her own room, Mrs. Molyneux's woman came to ſay that her miſtreſs was dreſſed. Celeſtina had once determined to tell Mrs. Molyneux how ſoon ſhe meant to quit her, and to have taken leave of her, but on reflection ſhe thought her doing ſo might betray her reſolution to Willoughby, from whom it was neceſſary to conceal it till it was actually executed.

executed. She now therefore intended to leave a letter of thanks, and to take leave of Mrs. Molyneux as if it was only till the next day.

But when the moment approached in which ſhe was in reality to bid adieu—perhaps for ever—to the friend and companion of her infancy—to the daughter of her beloved friend—to the ſiſter of Willoughby—her heart ſunk within her; and hardly had ſhe ſtrength to go to the door of Mrs. Molyneux's dreſſing room, on opening which ſhe ſaw her friend ſtanding before the glaſs putting the laſt finiſh to her very elegant dreſs, while with her eyes fixed on her own figure, ſhe was arguing with more than her uſual warmth with ſome perſon who ſat beſide her, and who Celeſtina preſently diſcovered to be Willoughby himſelf, in boots, and his hair out of powder. His countenance was pale and dejected; and while his ſiſter talked to him he leaned with one arm on another chair, and ſeemed rather muſing than attending.

"I am

"I am glad you are come," ſaid Mrs. Molyneux to Celeſtina as ſhe entered, "for here is George behaving quite abſurdly: he will not go he ſays to Lord Caſtlenorth's, though the dinner is made on purpoſe for him. Do Celeſtina—he minds your opinion always more than mine—do try to make him underſtand how very abſurd and odly he acts."

"I have no talents," Celeſtina would have ſaid, but the words died away on her lips; and before ſhe could collect courage to finiſh the ſentence, Molyneux, who was now ready, came in, and ſeeing Willoughby unprepared to go, expreſſed his ſurprize in terms which were warmer than Willoughby could hear with perfect command of temper. "Surely, Sir," ſaid he, "I am my own maſter. I am not diſpoſed to go, and I will not go!"

"And what am I to ſay," cried Mrs. Molyneux, "to Lady Caſtlenorth, to my uncle, and to my couſin?"

"Juſt what you pleaſe," replied he.

Molyneux,

Molyneux, finding by the tone in which his brother-in law ſpoke, that he would not be dictated to, now called his wife out of the room, and Willoughby and Celeſtina were left alone.

It was now that all her fortitude and ſtrength of mind were neceſſary. Her duty evidently was to perſuade Willoughby to accompany his ſiſter, and to complete a marriage which his mother had when dying enjoined: a marriage ſo neceſſary to the acquiſition of all that the world calls happineſs in life, and on which depended the continuance of his family eſtate in his poſſeſſion. But her heart refuſed to aſſent to what her reaſon pointed out as the conduct ſhe ought to purſue, and the affection he now ſo evidently had for her, adding to the ſtrength of her long attachment to him, ſhe found it impoſſible to urge his quitting her for ever, though ſhe thought ſhe had yet courage enough to tear herſelf from him if ſhe heard not his complaints

nor

nor witneſſed his agonies, while ſhe combated her own.

"I cannot—I will not go to theſe people," ſaid Willoughby after a ſhort ſilence: "why ſhould I? ſince to marry Miſs Fitz-Hayman would be the height of cruelty to her—ſince I am incapable of diſſimulation—ſince——In ſhort, Celeſtina, I feel it to be impoſſible for me to live with her—to live without you: and I have determined to declare myſelf in writing to that effect."

Celeſtina, whom this ſpeech was not calculated to calm, anſwered, trembling—"Indeed I think you wrong, Mr. Willoughby. As your uncle, as your mother's brother, Lord Caſtlenorth has undoubtedly a claim to this mark of reſpect. It is not probably expected to be any thing more than a viſit of form, and ſurely you ought not rudely and without reaſon to decline it."

"If it *were indeed* meant only as a viſit of ceremony," ſaid he——

"It

"It is in your power, however," interrupted Celeſtina, "to appear to conſider it ſo: your not going muſt ſeem very extraordinary; your going certainly leads to no conſequence."

"If you think ſo," replied Willoughby; "if you think I ought to go.—But why did they not aſk you?"

"Why ſhould they aſk me?" anſwered ſhe. "I am almoſt unknown to Lady Caſtlenorth; and in the little time I ever did ſee her, I appeared to be no favourite. Believe me, ſo far from being diſpleaſed I am rejoiced at the omiſſion."

"Inſolent, odious woman!" cried Willoughby. "If any thing could add to my diſlike of her and her daughter, it would be the ſupercilious airs they gave themſelves towards you even in the ſhort moment I ſaw them here. But my Celeſtina ſhall never be expoſed to their inſulting ſcorn; and if I myſelf this time undergo the puniſhment of keeping up the hateful farce which I have ſo unhappily been en-

gaged in, it ſhall be with a determination to put an end to it."

At this moment Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux entered the room; and Celeſtina wiſhing them all an agreeable day, left it; having ſuſtained with ſome difficulty the various emotions which were contending in her boſom. Willoughby ſoon after left the houſe, to dreſs at his own lodgings, which were in the neighbourhood, and having promiſed to join his brother and ſiſter at dinner, they ſoon after departed themſelves, much better ſatisfied with him than they were before his ſhort converſation with Celeſtina.

CHAPTER VIII.

CELESTINA, though more unwilling than ever to go, had preſcribed to herſelf in her cooler moments a line of conduct, from which, feeling it her duty to adhere to it, ſhe now determined not to depart. In arguing with herſelf on it's propriety, and ſtrengthening her faultering reſolution, ſhe paſſed the night. At four o'clock the ſervant who was commiſſioned to awaken her, came to her door: ſhe aroſe and dreſſed herſelf by candle-light: the morning was cold and dark: every object appeared dreary and forlorn: ſhe hurried on her cloaths however, and endeavoured to drive away every recollection that might enfeeble her ſpirits too much; but, as ſhe paſſed the door of the dreſſing room, ſhe

remembered that it was there ſhe had ſeen Willoughby perhaps for the laſt time, and almoſt involuntarily ſhe went in, and by the light of her ſolitary candle, contemplated a whole length picture of him which had juſt been finiſhed for his ſiſter: the likeneſs was ſo ſtrong, that by the wavering and uncertain light that fell upon it, ſhe almoſt fancied he was about to ſpeak to her: ſhe ſtarted at the idea, and feeling a ſort of chilly terror at the ſilence and obſcurity of every thing around her, ſhe turned away and haſtened to the ſervant who had prepared her tea in the parlour: ſhe had however hardly time to drink it, before the hackney coach which had been ordered the night before was at the door; and having ſeen what little baggage ſhe had not before ſent put into it, ſhe ſtepped in herſelf, and was ſoon at a diſtance from the reſidence of Mrs. Molyneux, from the friend of her early years, and was launched alone and unprotected into a world of which ſhe had yet ſeen nothing but through the

the favourable medium lent by affluence and proſperity to thoſe who from thence contemplate difficulties they are never likely to encounter and calamities they probably never can participate.

That a young woman, who might ſtill have enjoyed thoſe indulgences, ſhould renounce them at an age when they have ſo many charms; that Celeſtina, who had been educated with ſo much delicacy, and accuſtomed ſince her firſt recollection to every indulgence, ſhould thus voluntarily enter on a life of comparative hardſhip and deprivation, may appear improbable, but when it is added that ſhe quitted the man to whom ſhe had ſo long been fondly attached, and leaving him to her fortunate rival, devoted herſelf to a life of ſolitude and regret, ſuch an effort of heroiſm in a woman not yet quite nineteen, might be claſſed among impoſſibilities, were it related of any other than Celeſtina: but her character was an uncommon one: though ſhe had always been told by Mrs. Wil-

loughby that her birth was very uncertain, and that nothing was known of it but that it was diſgraceful to her parents, ſince they had taken ſuch pains to conceal it, ſhe felt within herſelf a conſciouſneſs of hereditary worth, an innate pride, which would never ſuffer her to believe herſelf deſcended from mean or unworthy perſons: her open and commanding countenance, where ſat dignity mingled with ſweetneſs; her nymph-like and graceful form, which might have rivalled the models of Grecian art; were advantages of which, though ſhe was not vain of them, ſhe could not be inſenſible, and if ſhe had any foible, (a perfect character it has been ſaid muſt not be repreſented becauſe it cannot exiſt) if ſhe had any foible, it was carrying a little too far, though ſhe carefully concealed it, that ſort of pride which ſeemed born with her, and which, after all that has been ſaid againſt it, is often, eſpecially in a young and beautiful woman, a fortunate defect.

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The circumſtances of her birth had ſeldom been touched upon in the family, for it was a topic which could not but be painful to her: but if ever any thing relating to it had been accidentally introduced, when Mrs. Willoughby was converſing with her three children, (as ſhe often termed Willoughby, Matilda, and Celeſtina,) Willoughby would ſay laughingly that it was impoſſible ſhe could be born of French parents: his mother had been ſometimes half angry at this aſſertion, in which however he uſually perſiſted, aſſerting, with prejudice that ſhe declared to be entirely Engliſh, that no native of the South of France ever had a complexion or a form like her's. After ſhe grew up, though theſe perfections became more eminent, Willoughby never appeared to notice them; with the improvement of her form, her mind kept pace; and as it acquired every day more ſtrength, ſhe gradually became more ſenſible of her obligation to her benefactreſs; but while ſhe indulged her gra-

titude towards the friend on whom ſhe depended, ſhe felt that ſhe was not born to be dependent.

This elevation of ſpirit now ſupported her; and the conſciouſneſs ſhe was acting right, blunted for a while the poignancy of that pain which ſhe too ſenſibly felt in tearing herſelf from Willoughby. Obliged to act for herſelf, having no breaſt on which ſhe could with propriety lean, her naturally exalted ſoul acquired new firmneſs, before which trifling inconveniences diſappeared; and with an heart occupied by the beloved image of Willoughby, and the ſacrifice ſhe was making for him, ſhe hardly remembered that ſhe had never in her life been in a ſtage coach before, till ſhe found herſelf ſeated in one under the dark gateway of an inn in the city at five o'clock in a dreary winter morning.

Two female paſſengers had already taken their places; one of whom expreſſed great anxiety for a number of hat boxes and caravan trunks which the people belonging to the

the inn were placing in different parts of the coach, while the lady particularly recommended to their care one box, which she assured them contained her new *laylock* bonnet, an article for the safety of which she was so solicitous that she would have taken the great machine in which it was contained into the coach, had it not been opposed by the coachman, and presently after by a man who had been drinking with him, and who now preparing to enter the coach, protested vehemently against this whim of his sister Mary's.—"Who d'ye think will be scroughed and crammed up," cried he, "with your confounded trumpery? No, no such thing. Here Daniel, prythee take and stow it somewhere or another: it shall not enter the coach, I'll be sworn."

The man then placed himself by the side of the other female passenger, opposite to Celestina, and appeared to be as anxious for his own ease as his sister was for the safety of her wardrobe. The coach moved

on, but it was ſtill quite dark, and ſilence prevailed for the firſt four or five miles, interrupted only by ſome fretful expreſſions from the lady of the bandboxes, at the inconveniences to which people were ſubjected by going in ſtage coaches, and ſome exclamations againſt the unfortunate dampneſs of the morning, which ſhe declared would certainly penetrate the covering and entirely ſpoil her *laylock* bonnet, which ſhe ſaid coſt her three guineas.

"The more fool you," cried her brother, who was of a character Celeſtina had never had an opportunity of ſeeing before, that of a country tradeſman affecting to be a wit and a buck—"the more fool you, ſiſter Mary. What! d'ye think a three guinea bonnet will make you look three years younger? No, no, take my word for it, your flounces, and fringes, and furbelows ſerve for no purpoſe at all but to ſhew your wrinkles."

"Wrinkles!" repeated the lady diſdainfully, "what do you mean, John Jedwyn?

Jedwyn? I declare you are so rude and disagreeable I always repent travelling with you. I wish you would find out another subject."

"Egad," answered Jedwyn, "I cannot have a worse than your wrinkles, that's true enough; and upon my soul," added he, looking confidently in the face of Celestina, and then in that of the other female passenger, who, though pale and thin, was very young and very pretty, "here *is* two better subjects, one aside of me and t'other opposite: no, no, sister of mine, now day breaks a little, and lets a body see how the land lays, you'll hear no more about your wrinkles; for as Hamlet says—let me see—aye—"here's that metal that's more attractive; hey, Miss?"

Celestina, to whom this hey Miss was addressed, who had till now been very little aware of the species of rudeness and impertinence to which her mode of travelling might subject her, was shocked and alarmed at this address from a person,

who, had he ſeen her a few days before, would have approached her with awe and ſpoken to her with diffidence. She remained ſilent however, caſting a look on the man ſufficiently expreſſive of the contempt ſhe felt for him: but he was not of a humour to be eaſily daunted or repulſed, and without ſeeming to underſtand her, began, with purſe-proud pertneſs to relate as if it was a narrative which all the world ſhould be informed of, that he was a grocer and chandler at Exeter, in a very flouriſhing trade, and in partnerſhip with a gentleman who had married one of his ſiſters: "and this *laylock* bonnet lady," continued he, "is my eldeſt ſiſter, who has been a *viſiting* this half year and better an old aunt of our's at Camberwell. She is an old maid herſelf, but deviliſh rich, and from a ſort of fellow feeling you know ſhe intends to make our Mary here her heir. The old girl muſt hop the perch ſoon, or all her money won't get her dear niece

niece a huſband it's my opinion unleſs may be an Iriſhman or a ſtrolling player."

This ſecond attack on herſelf, and his viſible admiration of Celeſtina's beauty, completed the ill humour of his ſiſter, who with a look where anger and ſcorn contended for pre-eminence, remained ſilently ſwelling, while the facetious trader again addreſſed himſelf to Celeſtina.

"What do you never make talking? Come, ſince now you have a hiſtory of me, let's hear a little who you are, and where you are bound to?"

"Sir," replied Celeſtina, "it is impoſſible that either can be of any conſequence to you."

"How are you ſure of that?" cried Mr. Jedwyn with a loud laugh: "now I think nothing is more likely than that we may be better acquainted. 'Tis nothing now I believe for a young man of ſpirit, as well in the world as I am, to take a fancy to a pretty woman."

"A fancy!"

"A fancy!" exclaimed Miſs Mary Jedwyn, with great acrimony—"a fancy! Jack Jedwyn I am amazed at you!"

"And why amazed, my ancient ſpinſter?" retorted he. "What the devil! I'm my own maſter I hope. To be ſure you are ſome fifteen or twenty years older than me. But what of that?—So much the worſe for you. I hope I a'nt to be governed by a duenna. What a plague, mayn't I talk to a handſome girl I wonder without your putting in your ſquinnygut opinion?"

"If you intend to inſult me," anſwered the lady, trying to hide under the appearance of calm contempt her great diſpoſition to cry:—"if you intend to inſult me, I am ſure I heartily wiſh I had got the better of my fears and travelled alone in a poſt *chai*; for no rudeneſs as I might have met on the road could be worſe than your's."

"That's your gratitude now," cried Jedwyn, "for my coming up clear from Exeter to fetch you at a time when I had no buſineſs

buſineſs in London, nor ſhould a had for theſe ſix weeks: that's your thanks for my kindneſs, and for liſtening to your nonſenſical fears and frights. Rude to you! oh Lord! as if any mortal man who has eyes would ever look at you twice. No, Mary! make yourſelf eaſy; that weazen, winterly viſage of your's, is ſafeguard enough if you were to travel from here to Jericho."

He then began to mimic his ſiſter, and enlarge on the terrors to which ſhe was, he ſaid, perpetually ſubject, leſt ſome ſad daring rake of a man ſhould carry her away: and had he been leſs groſs and diſguſting, Celeſtina would hardly have forborne a ſmile at ſome part of the ludicrous repreſentation he gave of this apprehenſive delicacy and trembling nicety, for which ſhe could not, in the perſonal attractions of Miſs Jedwyn, find any reaſonable grounds; for ſhe was very tall, very thin, and very yellow: her long, ſcraggy neck, appeared hardly adequate to the ſupport of a head, where art had ſo redundantly been called in

in aid of nature, that it ſeemed to abound in ſhining black hair, nicely curled, without powder, which was ſuffered to wanton over her forehead and flow down her back, while a little white bever hat, perched on one ſide, was meant to give to her countenance that bewitching archneſs which ſhe had obſerved that mode of head dreſs to beſtow on the young and lovely.

Mr. Jedwyn having exhauſted all his immediate ſtock of wit on his ſiſter, now left her to digeſt the indignation he had raiſed, and applied himſelf again to Celeſtina. Having no idea that any thing but money beſtowed conſequence, and having lived the greater part of his time among thoſe who had leſs of it than himſelf, he had never been accuſtomed to allow of any ſuperiority, nor could he comprehend how a young woman ſo humbly ſituated in life, as to travel in a ſtage coach, could help being charmed into liking by his wit, and awed into complaiſance by his importance.

On

On ſuch a man the native dignity of Celeſtina failed totally of it's uſual effect. He became more and more troubleſome; for he was piqued but not repreſſed by the coldneſs and even contempt of her manner. He told her, among much other impertinence, that all her ſhyneſs ſhould not hinder him from finding out who ſhe was; and then with yet more offenſive familiarity addreſſed himſelf to the other young woman, who he thought belonged to her, and who heard his converſation with terror and diſlike as great as that of Celeſtina.

His behaviour at length becoming inſupportably uneaſy to her, Celeſtina, when the coach reached the village where they were to breakfaſt, determined not to ſubject herſelf to it any longer; ſhe therefore ordered her tea to be carried into another room, and a poſt chaiſe to be ready as ſoon as ſhe had drank it.

As ſhe ſat at her breakfaſt, ſhe ſaw the young woman, whoſe countenance had greatly intereſted her, walk by the window ſlowly

ſlowly and dejectedly, one hand held to her forehead, and an handkerchief in the other. Ever ready to aſſiſt the unhappy, the generous heart of Celeſtina was touched with compaſſion towards this forlorn ſtranger. "She is as young as I am," ſaid ſhe, "and perhaps even more unfortunate. Why ſhould I not take her with *me*, if ſhe is, as I ſuppoſe, travelling the ſame road? why ſhould I leave her expoſed to the inſults of that odious man, which humble as her fortune ſeems to be, ſhe ill knows how to bear. I may at leaſt, though I cannot otherwiſe aſſiſt her, ſave her from paſſing the remainder of the journey improperly and unpleaſantly." Celeſtina then rang the bell, and directing her fellow traveller to be called, deſired her not only to partake of her breakfaſt, but to accompany her the reſt of the way in a poſt-chaiſe which ſhe had ordered, to eſcape from Mr. Jedwyn.

The young perſon, notwithſtanding the kindneſs of Celeſtina's addreſs, ſtill continued ſtanding, and with a faint bluſh ſaid,

"You

"You are very good, Madam;—but—though we happen to be in the ſame coach, I am ſure I ought not to put myſelf on a footing with you: I am only a ſervant, travelling into the country to my friends to recover my health, and it would be very wrong in me to intrude on a lady like you."

Celeſtina, won by this humble ſimplicity, ſoon reaſſured her new acquaintance, and ſoon after Jeſſy Woodburn, (which was her name,) followed Celeſtina to the chaiſe; where, having paid the coach in London, ſhe now had directed her box to be placed.

Mr. Jedwyn left the hot rolls and chocolate with which he was regaling himſelf, to remonſtrate at the chaiſe door againſt this ſeceſſion. Celeſtina, without giving him any anſwer, drew up the glaſſes the moment ſhe was ſeated, which gave Jedwyn an opportunity to ſay to the poſtillion, who was not yet on horſeback, that if he would in the courſe of a fortnight find out who the lady was, and whither ſhe went, he would make up the half crown he then gave

gave him half a guinea. The boy readily promiſed to execute to the beſt of his power ſo lucrative a commiſſion; and Celeſtina and her companion were ſoon at a diſtance, and proceeded on their journey, much pleaſed with the exchange they had made of a conveyance.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

CELESTINA having by her eaſy and gentle manners conquered part of the extreme diffidence of her companion, began to queſtion her about her ſituation in life; and as ſhe had one of thoſe faces and one of thoſe voices which win every heart where any ſpark of feeling is found, Jeſſy ſoon found herſelf enough at eaſe, and even flattered by the intereſt ſhe ſeemed to take in her fate, as to acquire courage to relate the following narrative.

"I muſt go back a great way, Madam, ſince you command me to tell you all I know of myſelf; even as far as my grandfather, who is ſtill living, and who is one of the richeſt farmers in our part of Devonſhire uſing his own land, as all his family

family I have heard have done before him for a great many years. He married a clergyman's daughter who had been educated very well, greatly indeed above the sort of life she was to lead as a farmer's wife. But she was very pretty. Her father left her unprovided for, and so she married perhaps more for money than love. My mother was the only child they ever had, and my grandmother, though her own education had only served to make her unhappy, would fain have had her daughter brought up as she had been herself; but her husband of a very hard and obstinate temper, and repenting perhaps of having married a wife too fine for him, was so far from allowing her to have any education, that he went to the other extreme; insisting that his girl should do as his mother did thirty or forty years before, and not only be taught to understand all the business of the farm, but to live as he did himself, and as he obliged his wife to do, the same as the farming men.

The

The conſequence of this difference of opinion was fatal to my poor mother: one of her parents took every opportunity of giving her notions above herſelf, which very naturally, ſhe eaſily took; and the other ſeemed to delight in humbling and degrading her: when ſhe was about eighteen ſhe loſt her mother, and then was forced to ſubmit to the harſh and unneceſſary confinement impoſed upon her by her father, from whom ſhe endeavoured to conceal her paſſion for reading, which only gained ſtrength by this unreaſonable reſtraint. Home was very uneaſy to her, but ſhe could hardly ever leave it but by ſtealth. As ſhe was likely to have a very good fortune, ſhe had numberleſs ſuitors; but my grandfather would ſuffer none of them to ſee her; deſigning to marry her to a relation of his own almoſt as old as himſelf, to whom ſhe had an invincible averſion, which through the timidity of her nature ſhe dared not declare.

A neigh-

A neighbouring farmer, with whom my grandfather had for many years been at variance, and with whom he had had two or three law-ſuits, had two ſons, both brought up to his own buſineſs; the eldeſt was married and had a family, but the other had been ſpoiled by his mother, and the notice taken of him by the neighbouring gentlemen on account of his ſkill in field ſports; he had indeed always been rather fonder of being with them at cricket matches, and races, than minding his farm. He found means to introduce himſelf to my mother, though he had been poſitively refuſed by my grandfather: he won her affections, and after ſeveral private meetings ſhe agreed to go off with him: the conſequence of which was her having the door of her paternal houſe ſhut againſt her for ever.

For a little time after this marriage my mother was received at the houſe of her father in law, but on his death it became the right of the eldeſt ſon, who had a number

number of children; and as my father's family were all irritated and disappointed by the obstinate resentment of my grandfather towards his daughter, they soon behaved with such unkindness towards her, that she prevailed on my father to quit them, and take a little farm of his own, which he with difficulty borrowed money enough to stock, for he had long since paid away in discharge of old debts, all the money left him by his father. He had been so long used to an idle, or rather a gay life, that he could not now accustom himself to the labour requisite on so small a farm. My mother however by incessant attention remedied for some years this deficiency on his part; and though nothing was laid by, they contrived to live; my mother making from time to time attempts to obtain her father's pardon, though she received nothing but cruel and positive refusals, either to see her or her children, or ever to give them the least assistance.

"This hardneſs of heart, which ſhould have excited pity, only made my father treat my poor mother with harſhneſs too. A young man of fortune in the neighbourhood juſt then coming of age, was often at his ſeat near our little farm, and took ſuch a fancy to my father that he was always inviting him to his houſe, where he lived entirely with his friend, and aſſociating with gentlemen from London, and women they brought down with them. He never came home but in ſuch a terrible humour, that I and my ſiſter, who were then about ten and nine years old, uſed to be terrified to death; yet when he was gone, as he ſometimes was for weeks together, my mother lamented his abſence and the loſs of his affection, much more than the fatigue, poverty, and ſorrow, to which his conduct expoſed us all.

"Preſent anxiety and the fear of leaving me and my ſiſter to a fate as deplorable as her own, together with the inceſſant toil attending the care of a farm wholly neglected

lected by her husband, gradually destroyed her constitution, till at last, Madam, her, heart was quite broken. When she found she had only a few hours to live, she entreated the clergyman of the parish to go to her father, and beg, if he would not see her, that he would only send her his forgiveness, for she could not die in peace without it.

"Even that he had the cruelty to refuse! I lost my dear mother, Madam; and my sister, who was always of a weak constitution, followed her soon afterwards to the grave. Ah! how often have I wished that I had died too. Troubles now multiplied around us: my father's great friend had by this time so completely ruined himself, that every thing was seized and he left the country. My father having no longer a house to be at, was forced to live at home; but it was only for a little while; for during my mother's illness every thing had been neglected, and we could not pay our rent; so the landlord seized, our cattle

were ſold, and we were turned out of the farm and went to a miſerable cottage in the next village; where, as my father was ſo unuſed to work, we ſubſiſted for a while on the reluctant charity of my uncle, whoſe daughters were always reproaching me with taking their bread from them. Believe me, Madam, I did all I could do to earn it for my father and myſelf: but what could hands ſo feeble as mine do towards ſupporting us both? I made an attempt to ſee my grandfather, and to implore his pity and protection towards one who had never offended him; but he ordered me to be driven from his door, and never again ſuffered to appear there: orders which thoſe he had about him were ready enough to execute. I returned home quite diſheartened indeed, but ſtill endeavouring to the utmoſt of my power to procure a ſupport by my labour for my father and myſelf; I even went out to work in the fields; but all I could earn was inſufficient that we often wanted neceſſary food, at leaſt *I* have

have often wanted it. But my father had made an acquaintance with a widow woman in the next village, who was ſaid to be worth forty or fifty pounds. She was young too and not ugly, and in leſs than a year after my dear mother's death, he married her, and we removed to her houſe.

"The extremes of poverty I had before known, bitter as I thought them, were comparatively happineſs to what I now endured. I became the ſervant of my mother-in-law, only without wages. She ſoon brought my father an increaſe of family: to them then I was nurſe, and very ſoon had neither ſleep by night or reſpite by day. I thought it my duty to bear every thing for my father, without murmuring, but as my fatigue and ſufferings increaſed, my dejection increaſed too, and I was ſometimes through mere deſpondence unable to fulfil my heavy taſks, in which if I failed in the ſlighteſt degree, I was inſulted with opprobious language, and told to go to my rich grandfather.

"Alas! my rich grandfather continued inexorable; but home was ſo dreadful that I determined to go to ſervice, being near twenty, and able I thought to undertake any place that could be offered me; for a harder than that I now filled, it was impoſſible to meet with.

"I applied to a relation I had at Exeter, who after ſome enquiries procured me a place in the family of an attorney in London, who was willing to diſpenſe with my want of experience in favour of my being a country ſervant. Thither therefore I went, and entered as chearfully as I could on a new mode of life; endeavouring to forget that I ever had any expectations of a better. The dark, damp places where the ſervants of perſons in the midling ranks of life, live in the city, appeared very dreadful to me; and it was my buſineſs, after a day of fatiguing work, to ſit up for my maſter or the clerks, who were often out very late. My miſtreſs too was a very fine lady, and kept a great deal of company,

pany, and it was part of my employment to wait on her own maid, who was alſo a ſort of houſekeeper, and much more difficult to be pleaſed than the lady herſelf: ſhe took care indeed that I ſhould never want buſineſs; but determined as I was never again to be a burthen to my father, I went through the duties of my place, heavy as they were, with courage and ſteadineſs; ſo that even this ſecond miſtreſs, however unwilling to be pleaſed, could not find fault with me.

" Among a great number of clerks that my maſter kept, there was one who was employed merely to copy, and was not admitted among the reſt, though he looked I am ſure more like a gentleman than any of them. He did not lodge in the houſe, but came every morning early to his work, and ſat at it, poor young man! till five or ſix o'clock at night, when he dined with us ſervants, after the family and other clerks had done. Often indeed, inſtead of eating, he would ſigh all dinner time as if his heart

would break; and I could not help fancying that he had been uſed to live quite in other company; though he never ſeemed above ours, but was always very obliging, though he was very melancholy.

"It happened once, that my maſter had ſome extraordinary buſineſs to do that required great haſte; it was ſome papers that were to be ſent to India; and Mr. Cathcart, the young man I have been ſpeaking of, hearing my maſter ſay how afraid he was he ſhould not get ready, offered to work all day on Sunday, when none of the reſt of the clerks would have ſtaid from their pleaſure on any account. My maſter was pleaſed with his willingneſs to oblige, and he ſat down to his taſk. Nobody was in the houſe but him and me; for it was the cuſtom of my maſter and miſtreſs to dine in the country on a Sunday with my miſtreſs's mother at Edmonton; and all the gentlemen in the office went different ways. The footman attended my miſtreſs; and Mrs. Gillam, her maid, always went to

ſee

ſee her acquaintance, who lived at the other end of the town, and very often came home ſadly out of temper becauſe her place was not ſo fine and ſo faſhionable as their's; and then I was ſure to ſuffer for it, as indeed I did for all her ill temper when ſhe had nobody elſe to vent it upon.

"Ah! Madam! often of a Sunday in the ſummer I have gone up into our dining room, becauſe the ſtreet was ſo cloſe and narrow that below we hardly ſaw day light from one end of the year to the other; and I have opened the ſaſh, and looked againſt the black walls and ſhut windows of the houſes oppoſite, and have thought how diſmal it was! Ah! I remembered too well the beautiful green hills, the meadows and woods, where I ſo often uſed to ramble with my ſiſter when we were children, in our own country, before we were old enough to know that my poor mother was unhappy, and had learned to weep with her! How often have I wiſhed thoſe days would come again, and how often

have I ſhut my eyes and tried to fancy I ſaw once more all the dear objects that then were ſo charming. Alas! the dream would not laſt long! for if it did, it ſerved only to make me feel more unhappy, when, inſtead of being able to indulge it, I was obliged to go back to hard, and what was yet worſe, to dirty work in our diſmal kitchen. In Devonſhire I had been uſed to work hard enough; but I had always freſh air to breathe, and could now and then of an evening ſit at our cottage window, and look at the moon, and fancy that my mother might be there with my ſiſter, and that they ſaw and pitied their poor unfortunate Jeſſy. Tears then relieved me; and I gathered courage to bear the next day the ill humour of my mother in law, which now that it was over I fancied was not worſe than the ill humour of Mrs. Gillam. My father's harſhneſs indeed was worſe than either, becauſe I loved him, and every time he uſed to ſpeak cruelly,

elly to me, and ſeem to wiſh me away, it was like a dagger in my heart!"

The tears of the unfortunate Jeſſy here interrupted her narrative a moment, and Celeſtina took occaſion to ſay—

"But what were you going to tell me about Mr. Cathcart? You ſeem to have forgotten him?"

"Ah! Madam!" replied ſhe with a deep ſigh, "I thought after I began to talk of him that I was doing wrong, and that it was better not to ſay any more about him: beſides, Madam, though you are ſo good and ſo condeſcending, it is not perhaps proper for me to trouble you with all the reaſons I have to be ſorrowful."

"Indeed I wiſh extremely to know them," replied Celeſtina; "and particularly I deſire to know all that relates to Mr. Cathcart. The little you have ſaid, has intereſted me greatly."

"It was on the Sunday, Madam, that I was ſpeaking of, when every body was gone out, that poor Mr. Cathcart firſt

ſpoke to me alone. Often before that to be ſure I thought he pitied me, when he ſaw me doing work too heavy for my ſtrength; and often he has offered to help me, and did not diſdain to aſſiſt me, though the footman did; and yet I am ſure his look and his manners were a great deal more like thoſe of a nobleman than any thing elſe. Mrs. Gillam however was always ſo angry if ſhe ſaw him ſpeak to, or help me, and uſed to put herſelf into ſuch paſſions, that he was afraid almoſt of looking at me before her, leſt it ſhould be the occaſion of my being uſed ill.

"On the Sunday, Madam, that I was ſpeaking of, he had finiſhed all my maſter left for him to do, between ſix and ſeven o'clock: for he wrote ſuch a beautiful hand and ſo quick that his writing ſeemed done by enchantment. That day he had eat no dinner: but a little after ſix o'clock he came down into the kitchen, where I was ſitting: 'Jeſſy,' ſaid he, 'will you 'make me ſome tea: I am fatigued, and I 'think

'think it will refreſh me.' Ah! Madam! how pleaſed I was to do any thing for him. As he ſat on the other ſide of the table drinking his tea, I looked at him, and thought his eyes ſeemed inflamed as if he had been crying, and he ſeemed more melancholy than uſual. 'What is the mat-'ter, Mr. Cathcart?' ſaid I, 'you have 'tired yourſelf too much?'

'Yes,' anſwered he, 'I have been 'writing a long time; but I have finiſhed 'my buſineſs, ſo I never mind my head 'ache.' He ſeemed deſirous of turning the diſcourſe, and reaching acroſs to the ſide of the table where I ſat, he took up a torn book, which, while I was ſweeping the clerk's office the day before, my maſter had thrown to me, bidding me burn it, for that he would not have ſuch trumpery lay about there. I never had time to read, though my poor mother had taught me to love it; and I had thrown this book into a drawer, from whence I had taken it but a moment before Mr. Cathcart came down.

"He

"He enquired how I came by it, and when I told him, aſked if I had read it? I anſwered that I had no time. 'It is my 'book,' ſaid he, ſighing from the bottom of his heart as he ſpoke; 'and it is the 'ſtory of a poor young man, who was as 'unfortunate as I am: but he had the 'reſolution to end his calamities; he in-'deed was not enchained to life as I muſt 'be. Heaven and earth!' exclaimed he, as if at that moment oppreſſed by ſome idea altogether inſupportable, 'how long 'ſhall I remain the wretch I am!'

"He ſtarted from his chair, and walked about the room with looks ſo wild that I was terrified to death: I went to him trembling, and beſought him to be calm, to tell me if I could do any thing for him: he looked eagerly at me a moment and burſt into tears—'Ah! Jeſſy,' cried he, 'you pity me, and all the return I make 'is to terrify and diſtreſs you!' For a moment, Madam, after this guſt of paſſion, he became calmer, and ſat down; then as I ſtood

I ſtood ſtill trembling by him, he took my hands within his and put them to his burning forehead and eyes; but after a moment ſeeming to recollect himſelf, he ſighed, let them go, and ſaid—"I hardly "know, Jeſſy, what ailed me juſt now; but "I was ſo tired, my ſpirits were ſo ex-"hauſted by having been ſo long at the "deſk employed in ſuch tedious kind of "writing, that when I looked at you— "when you ſeemed concerned for me— "I am ſo little uſed to meet any friendly "looks here, that your pity affected me "ſtrangely; I felt juſt then how terrible, "how very terrible my fate was; and "this proud rebellious heart, unſubdued "yet to my cruel deſtiny, deprived me for "a moment of my reaſon."

"Thank God," replied I, "you are now eaſier: indeed you did ſadly frighten me. Tell me, dear Mr. Cathcart, why did you talk ſo, and why are you ſo unhappy?"

"I will tell you, Jeſſy," anſwered he, "though you are the only perſon in the "houſe

'houſe who ever ſhall gueſs at my real ſi-
'tuation. I am unhappy:—not becauſe I
'was born and educated a gentleman,
'and am now reduced to a condition
'worſe than abſolute ſervitude, but be-
'cauſe thoſe I love and feel for more than
'for myſelf are fallen with me; becauſe
'my labour—and yet I am ſacrificing my
'life to follow it—my labour is inſufficient
'to ſupport a woman, delicately brought
'up, and her four infant children!'

"Ah! Madam! all the ſorrow I had ever known was nothing to the cold death-like feeling which ſeemed to wither up my heart, when for the moment I thought Mr. Cathcart was married and had a family! I did not know at that time why it hurt me ſo: but I was not able to ſpeak, while he, after remaining ſilent a minute, ſaid—'By my work to-day I have earned
'a guinea more than my weekly ſtipend:
'ſurely therefore inſtead of murmuring
'thus, I ought rather to be thankful that
'I have had power to do this, for to-mor-

'row

'row I ſhall receive it, and to-morrow I 'ſhall be able to carry to my Sophy and 'her children ſome neceſſaries which they 'have long wanted, but which I could 'not before ſpare money enough to pro-'cure for them, out of what I earned 'weekly as the only ſupport of us all.'

"Poor as I am, Madam, I could not help unlocking my tea cheſt where I kept my little ſavings; and though I trembled like a leaf as I did it, I put a guinea and ſome ſilver, all I had, into a paper, and carried it to him. Mr. Cathcart, ſaid I, pray be not offended, but take this trifle, and make uſe of it for your family; they want it more than I do, and you cannot think how much happier it will make me if you have it, than if I lay it out on myſelf."

'Gracious God!' cried he, 'this is too 'much. No, my dear, generous girl, do 'not imagine I will take what you have ſo 'hardly acquired. Believe me, Jeſſy, this 'inſtance of ſenſibility and kindneſs,

'charming

'charming as they are, only render me
'more wretched. In the meaneſt ſervi-
'tude, in the loweſt degradation, amid
'the hardeſt labour, I have found a ſoul
'ſo much ſuperior to thoſe I have met
'with in poliſhed ſociety! but your form,
'your manners, your ſentiments, are not
'thoſe of your ſtation: ſurely you were
'not born what I now ſee you?'

"Indeed," replied I, "I was: my father is now a labourer; I have no mother; nor any friend willing, if they are able, to do any thing for me: but while I am able to work I muſt not, I will not be diſcontented, whatever hardſhips I may undergo, if you Mr. Cathcart will but let me be your friend. Let me ſee your children; indeed I ſhall love them; and if your lady will give me leave I will work for them: I can bring any thing ſhe will give me to do home, and work in my own room inſtead of going to bed.

"I do not know, Madam, how I was able to ſay ſo much, for I felt my heart throb

throb as if it would break all the time I was ſpeaking. Oh! Madam! I was ſuddenly tranſported as it were to heaven, when Mr. Cathcart, thanking me a thouſand times for my offer, told me that the children he ſupported were not his own but his ſiſter's, whoſe huſband had been undone by the villainy of ſome people with whom he had been connected in trade, and by the wickedneſs of an attorney; it is impoſſible to deſcribe how I was relieved to find he was not married! for though I am ſure I ſhould have loved his children dearly becauſe they were his, yet methought I loved them much better now."

Senſations ſhe had herſelf felt in regard to Willoughby, now forcibly occurred to Celeſtina: ſhe remained ſilent however, and Jeſſy went on.

"After this time, Madam, Mr. Cathcart took every opportunity of ſpeaking to me; and I got leave to go out one evening, and he took me to ſee this beloved and unfortunate ſiſter. It was in one of thoſe little

little new houſes which are run up in a road leading from Iſlington to London, that Mr. Cathcart's family lodged: his ſiſter, Madam, was ſo like him, that the moment I ſaw her I could have died for her; and I forgot all the reluctance with which I agreed at his earneſt requeſt to go to ſee her: ſhe ſeemed to be four or five years older than he is, and was very pale and thin, but ſhe had ſuch beautiful eyes, and hands ſo white!—her form was ſo graceful, ſo commanding, that her very plain dreſs, and a cloſe cap, ſuch as widows wear, could not diſfigure her, or make her look otherwiſe than like a gentlewoman. When her brother led me in, ſhe held out her hand to me, and begged I would ſit down: though in ſuch a poor little lodging, I felt that ſhe was ſo much my ſuperior that I could not obey her without heſitation; but ſhe preſently, by her gracious manners, diſſipated my fears, and I ſat down by her cloſe to a frame on which ſhe had been working. A cradle, with a ſleeping baby in

in it, ſtood at her feet, by which a little girl of three years old ſat, as if watching the infant, and on haſſocks near the window were placed two little boys, the elder not above ſix years old, who were learning their taſks. As ſoon as my reception was over, ſhe ſmiled on her brother with more cheerfulneſs than it ſeemed poſſible a moment before for her countenance to aſſume; and deſired he would aſſiſt her in getting ſome tea for me. Cathcart went down ſtairs, and then ſhe entered into converſation with me: 'My brother,' ſaid ſhe, 'has often told me how unfit you are for 'the condition in which he found you, 'and if I may judge by your appearance, 'you certainly were not born to it. Had 'my dear Frank been any other than he 'is, I ſhould have ſuppoſed him influ-'enced by beauty; but I know that mere 'perſonal lovelineſs in any rank never 'affected him, and many reaſons induced 'me, Jeſſy, to conſent to ſee you—reaſons 'which relate to him as well as yourſelf.

'He

'He has told you, Jeſſy, that he was born 'to proſpects very different from thoſe 'now before him—proſpects which are I 'fear vaniſhed for ever. My misfortunes, 'which are ſuch as I dare not attempt to 'relate to you, have extended to him: 'yet does he with unexampled generoſity, 'give himſelf up to ſervitude, to aſſiſt me 'and my poor children. Judge whether 'ſuch a brother is not dear to me—judge 'whether I ought not to love all that he 'loves, and to comply as far as poſſible 'with all his wiſhes.

'I have of late ſeen with infinite pain, 'that in addition to all the calamities of 'indigence, a paſſion has ſeized him, 'which muſt encreaſe, and may perpe- 'tuate, his misfortunes, and I conſented, 'and even wiſhed to ſee you, that I might 'fairly ſtate to you the ſituation he is in, 'as to circumſtances; in the hope—a 'hope in which I truſt I ſhall not be de- 'ceived, that your good ſenſe, and even 'your regard for him, will lead you to

'avoid

'avoid an error ſo ſeducing as that of be-
'coming his wife.'

"I do not know, Madam, how I looked at that moment, but I believe Mrs. Elphinſtone thought I ſhould faint, for ſhe gave me immediate aſſiſtance by opening the window, fetched me a glaſs of water, and very earneſtly entreated me to try to recover myſelf before her brother returned. I ſhould be too tedious, Madam, were I to relate all that paſſed even in the few minutes we were together afterwards. I found that Cathcart's regard for me was ſuch, that he was willing to forget what he had once been, and what he might ſtill be, and to unite himſelf for ever with the poor and humble Jeſſy. Ah! Madam, had it not been for Mrs. Elphinſtone's ſake, who with her children had no other dependence, I ſhould have feared no poverty, no diſtreſs with him; but ſhould have been too happy to have begged round the world with him: as it was, I ſaw that I ought not to think a moment of a marriage,

riage, which would at beſt only encreaſe his difficulties. Oh! how I then wiſhed that my grandfather were leſs cruel, my poor father leſs imprudent!

"After this firſt interview with Mrs. Elphinſtone, I ſaw her whenever I could get leave to go out, which was not indeed very often: but my maſter, who did not want humanity, ſeeing me look dreadfully ill, ordered Mrs. Gillam to let me go out whenever ſhe could ſpare me, for air. Mrs. Elphinſtone, who watched every alteration of my countenance, gueſſed at all I ſuffered; and at length ſhe became ſo fond of me, that ſhe rather deſired than oppoſed the completion of her brother's wiſhes. The ſtruggle I underwent nearly coſt me my life: but at length, Madam, I have left them both. I could not bear to ſee my dear Cathcart every day more and more unhappy: I could not bear to become a burthen to him: for ſome time I redoubled my diligence, and exerted myſelf greatly beyond my ſtrength, from a hope, that by becoming

becoming neceſſary to my miſtreſs, I ſhould obtain an encreaſe of wages, out of which I thought it poſſible that I might be able to ſave ſomething; but the upper ſervant took pains to render all my endeavours ineffectual; and my health declined ſo rapidly under the labour and anxiety I endured, that Cathcart, whoſe uneaſineſs compleated the meaſure of my ſufferings, at length propoſed that I ſhould quit my ſervice, as the only means of ſaving my life, and try what my native air would do to reſtore me.

"I hope my father will receive me without unkindneſs, and ſuffer me to ſtay till I am able to take another ſervice; and ſometimes I am willing to flatter myſelf that my grandfather may relent, though it is more poſſible than probable."

"And where," enquired Celeſtina, "have you left your lover?"

"Ah! Madam," replied the weeping Jeſſy, "he ſtill remains writing for the exiſtence of his ſiſter and her children: at

his pen from early morning, to eleven or twelve at night. By such assiduous application he is enabled indeed to earn double the money he would otherwise do; but his dear health is fast declining, and God only knows," continued she, clasping her hands together, "whether I shall ever see him more: but if not, one comfort, one great comfort is, that we shall not be separated long:—in heaven nothing can part us!"

"Let us however hope," said Celestina, "that your tenderness, your fortitude, and generosity, will be rewarded on earth. Your father then knows nothing of your arrival?"

"Ah! no, Madam: I dared not write to him, for fear he should have been angry with me for having quitted my service, and have refused to receive me. Now I hope, when he sees me so sadly altered, for I am not at all like what I was when I left him, he will have some pity upon me, and suffer me at least to stay in his house till I have

have ſtrength enough to undertake another ſervice."

"You ſhall go with me, however, to-night," ſaid Celeſtina, "and you ſhall ſtay with me till you are fitter than you now appear to be to undergo an interview with this cruel father."

The poor Jeſſy, oppreſſed by this goodneſs, could not ſpeak, but ſhe kiſſed the hand of her benefactreſs with a reſpectful gratitude, and a mournful but not unpleaſing ſadneſs kept the generous and ſoft-hearted Celeſtina ſilent till their arrival at the inn where they were to remain that night.

CHAPTER X.

EARLY in the evening of the following day, Celeſtina and her humble friend arrived at the lodging ſhe had taken: it was a ſmall new built brick houſe, on the edge of an extenſive common: encloſures at a diſtance relieved a little the dreary uniformity of the view from it's windows, and a village church, with a few ſtraggling houſes ſcattered round the edge of the heath at the diſtance of about half a mile, gave ſome relief to the eye, and ſome intimation of an inhabited country: winter had alike diveſted the common of it's furze and heath bloſſoms, and the few elms on it's borders, of their foliage. All was alike dull, and unpleaſant: but Celeſtina remembered that ſhe had now eſcaped

escaped from the Castlenorths, from the sight of preparations for Willoughby's marriage, and that if she was not to live to see him happy, she should not now witness his struggles and his distress: she tried to believe that she could receive intelligence of his marriage with composure, and be glad in the reflection that he had obeyed his mother; but her heart revolted, and all she could promise herself was, to exert her resolution to obtain such a state of mind, as might enable her to hear, without very acute anguish, of an event, which, notwithstanding all that had passed at her last interview with Willoughby, she still considered as inevitable.

The first day after her arrival was passed in settling herself in her new habitation by the aid of Jessy, who helped her to arrange her books and her wardrobe. The pensive simplicity of her new friend's character won upon her every hour; and now, deprived as she was of all her former connections, and of every prospect of happi-

neſs for herſelf, ſhe was ſenſible of no other pleaſure than what aroſe from the power of ſoothing the ſorrows of her unfortunate companion, and forming ſchemes for reſtoring her to the favour of her grandfather; and to her unhappy lover, in whoſe fate ſhe became as much intereſted from the artleſs deſcription Jeſſy had given, as if ſhe had herſelf known him. It was neceſſary however to part with her: but as ſhe appeared in too weak a ſtate of health to encounter the rude reception ſhe might meet with from her father and her mother in law, if ſhe appeared before them without notice, Celeſtina thought it beſt to keep her till an anſwer could be obtained from them, and ſhe therefore hired a meſſenger, by whom the letter the trembling Jeſſy indited was diſpatched to the cottage of Woodburn, which was about ſeven miles diſtant. Towards evening he returned, and brought a reluctant and ſurly conſent from her father to receive her for a little time till ſhe recovered her health.

The

The terms in which this answer was written, though Celestina endeavoured to give them the best interpretation she could, were cruelly painful to poor Jessy, who wept over the letter, while Celestina, with the most generous pity, assured her, that if her father's behaviour to her was unkind, and her stay at his house uncomfortable, she would again receive her, and that she should be welcome to remain with her till her health was re-established, and till means could be found to procure for her the favour of her grandfather, who, on enquiry of her hostess, Celestina found to be as Jessy had represented him—a very rich farmer, now quite superannuated, and almost childish; who having once determined to resent his daughter's marriage, had persisted in it from the hard obstinacy of his nature, and had been supported in it by the arts of an old female relation who lived with him, and who, while she made a purse every year out of what was entrusted to her, looked forward with avidity to his

death, when ſhe hoped to poſſeſs the whole. Celeſtina procured an horſe and a man to lead it, the expence of which ſhe paid herſelf, and on the third day after their arrival at Thorpe Heath, Jeſſy took leave of her lovely and generous benefactreſs, who was now left to reflect, without interruption, on her own deſtiny.

Till lately ſhe had not been conſcious of the force of her attachment to Willoughby; for it began ſo early in life, that ſhe had never been alarmed by the uneaſineſs which ſeizes the heart on it's firſt reception of a new paſſion: ſhe now however found that her exiſtence had been delightful to her, only as his idea had mingled itſelf with every hour of it, and that, when ſhe believed ſhe ought no longer to indulge herſelf in thinking of him, ſhe could think of nothing elſe with either intereſt or pleaſure: the benevolence and tenderneſs of her heart ſtill afforded her ſome ſatisfaction, while ſhe could exert it in favour of the unfortunate, and the power of befriending

friending the deſolate and unhappy Jeſſy had called off her attention a little from her own uneaſy feelings; but now, having done all ſhe could at preſent do for her, her heart was again ſenſible of the cruel deprivation to which ſhe was condemned, and her mind occupied in reflecting on what Willoughby would think, what he would ſay, when he learned ſhe was gone; in conjectures on his behaviour to the Caſtlenorths, and in trembling ſolicitude whether he would write to her, or without any farther indulgence of an attachment, which he knew he ought not to cheriſh, drive her from his recollection, at leaſt till he had obeyed the injunctions of his mother, and by compleating the marriage ſhe had inſiſted upon, put it out of his power to think of Celeſtina otherwiſe than as his ſiſter.

Two or three days paſſed thus, before Celeſtina could acquire in any degree her uſual ſerenity, and ſit down to her books, her drawing, or her work. By muſic,

which ſhe now fancied would ſooth and calm her ſpirits, ſhe could not amuſe herſelf; for though ſhe had a piano forte which uſed to be called her's, yet, as it had never been formally given to her, and as Mrs. Molyneux had not mentioned it, Celeſtina would not take it on her quitting London. At length the firſt uneaſy ſenſations on her change of ſituation a little ſubſided, and ſhe began to conſider of a letter which ſhe thought it indiſpenſably neceſſary to write to Mrs. Molyneux.

In the mean time the ardent and eager temper of Willoughby exhibited in London a ſcene, which, could Celeſtina have known, it would have redoubled all her anxiety. The dinner of which he had been with difficulty induced to partake at Lord Caſtleaorth's, had ſerved only to fill him with new and invincible diſguſt towards the whole family, and hardly could he command himſelf ſo as not to betray it. The reſtraint, however, which, in conſideration of their relationſhip to his mother, he determined, whatever it

coſt

coſt him, to put upon his ſentiments, gave to two of the perſons concerned a favourable impreſſion of him: Lord Caſtlenorth, fond of form, and of that reſerve which he fancied ſupported dignity, liked his nephew the better he ſaid for not aſſuming the familiar and too eaſy manners, ſo diſagreeable to him in the behaviour of moſt of the young men he ſaw; and Miſs Fitz-Hayman, who liked his perſon better on every interview, and who never could for a moment ſuppoſe that any man could behold her's with indifference, imputed to reſpect and admiration that diſtant politeneſs which was intended to conceal averſion. Lady Caſtlenorth, however, who had ſeen more of the world than her daughter, and had not the ſame prejudices as her huſband, was by no means pleaſed with the obſervations ſhe made in the courſe of the day, nor with the pleaſure ſhe ſaw for the firſt time in the eyes of Willoughby when the moment of their departure arrived. This was not till four in the

morning. The late hour of dinner, and the parties which were made for cards, brought on a ſupper at near two, of which Lady Caſtlenorth ſeemed to expect her gueſts would partake: they ſtaid therefore; Lord Caſtlenorth retiring early, by the advice of Mrs. Calder; and the univerſatility of Lady Caſtlenorth's knowledge being diſplayed the whole time to the extreme fatigue of Willoughby, and by no means to the ſatisfaction of his ſiſter, who found in her aunt a deſire to monopolize not only all the converſation, but the attention of every man preſent, to whom ſhe contrived to addreſs herſelf by turns, and with whom ſhe appeared immediately offended, if Mrs. Molyneux, whom ſhe conſidered and treated as a pretty automaton, attracted even for a moment any of that admiration that ſhe was generally, at her own parties and among her own friends, accuſtomed to engroſs.

Willoughby was ſet down by his ſiſter at his own lodgings, and Mrs. Molyneux herſelf

himself knew nothing of Celestina's departure till breakfast the next day; when busied with preparations for a ball subscribed for by some noblemen of her acquaintance, she listened to the information hardly knowing she received it, and testified no other concern than by saying coldly—"I wish she had staid till to-morrow, for she has really something of a taste, and I should have liked to have had her here when I dress." This important dress, however, was too momentous to suffer her to think long of any human being; and when her brother called upon her about three o'clock, she was adjusting the ornaments on a tiara of her own invention, and had forgotten for the moment not only the sudden journey of Celestina but Celestina herself.

Willoughby sat down by her; and in hopes of Celestina's coming in, entered into conversation on frivolous subjects, to which he in fact gave so little attention that he hardly heard the answers his sister gave.

gave him. He desired, however, to prolong the time of his stay as much as possible, that without asking for Celestina, he might see her; and he knew, that busied as Mrs. Molyneux was, he should have an opportunity of speaking to her without observation.

The tiara was at length ornamented, and no Celestina appeared: Willoughby then enquired why she did not assist at an operation so important, and heard with pain and amazement that she had left the house at five o'clock that morning.

"And whither is she gone?" said he in a voice hardly audible: "and how could you suffer her to go?"

"Oh! as to that," answered Mrs. Molyneux, quite regardless of his distress, "she has taken those lodgings you know in Devonshire that you have so often heard her speak of; and for her going, you know she has long determined on it, and indeed I did not oppose it, thinking as things are,

are, it was the very beſt reſolution ſhe could take."

"As things are!" repeated Willoughby, trying vainly to ſtifle the painful ſenſation his ſiſter's coldneſs and inſenſibility gave him: "I know not, Mrs. Molyneux, what you mean exactly, but——"

He was proceeding, when the hair dreſſer, who on theſe great occaſions was employed in preference to her own maid, was announced; and Mrs. Molyneux, ordering him into her powdering room, walked immediately away, and left Willoughby ſitting like a ſtatue by the dreſſing table ſhe had left.

He remained there near a quarter of an hour, in a ſtate of mind difficult to be deſcribed: the danger to which Celeſtina muſt be expoſed, alone and unprotected; the probability of his loſing her for ever; nay of her ſacrificing herſelf to ſome of thoſe pretenders whom he doubted not her beauty would attract, in the ſame ſpirit of diſintereſted heroiſm, as that which had determined

determined her to quit London: the exceſſive tenderneſs he was conſcious of towards her, againſt which he found every hour the impoſſibility of contending, and the encreaſing diſguſt that he felt in contemplating the chains he had promiſed to put on, all contributed to overwhelm his mind with anguiſh, from which he ſaw not how it was eaſy or even poſſible to eſcape.

His firſt idea was to obtain a direction to Celeſtina, and follow her immediately; but he knew the delicacy of her mind, and he felt perfectly what was due to her ſituation:—reflections which checked thoſe intentions almoſt as ſoon as they were formed; and before he could decide on what he ought to do, he received from Molyneux, who had juſt come in and gone out again, an unſealed note, containing theſe lines:

"DEAR GEORGE,

"Im juſt returned from Lincoln's Inn, "where I have been to meet Atkins and

"ſome

"ſome other curſed bores about money; "I cannot get what I want of them: do "contrive to let me have five hundred "this evening for my pocket, and I wiſh "you would arrange things ſo as to have "the remainder of the unpaid five thou- "ſand and intereſt ready by this day "ſennight, or it will much inconvenience "me. Caſtlenorth is your man; and it "is but ſpeaking for the money to have it. "Let us ſee you to-morrow to dinner.

"Your's ever,

"P. H. MOLYNEUX."

This note, ſo peremptorily requiring what the writer knew Willoughby could not obtain but by haſtily confirming thoſe meaſures which were ſo diſpleaſing to him; this unfeeling precipitation, which appeared only a fineſſe to compel him to plunge into them, rouſed Willoughby from the ſtate of undetermined anxiety he had been in, into anger and indignation: his firſt ſolicitude however was to raiſe inſtantly

inſtantly the five hundred pounds for that evening's play, which was clearly the meaning of his brother-in-law; and ſnatching up his hat, he left the houſe, determining, in the firſt emotions of his reſentment, to enter it no more. He took his way towards the city, and applying to a banker in Lombard-ſtreet, in whoſe hands his father had kept his money, and who had had conſiderable advantages by his own affairs during his minority, he obtained, not without ſolicitation the moſt painful to his pride, and on terms as hard as would have been demanded by a common money lender, the ſum he wanted; which he incloſed in a cover, and ſent by one of the clerks, with theſe words:

"Mr. Willoughby encloſes to Mr. "Molyneux the ſum for which he has ſo "preſſing an occaſion, and aſſures him "he will loſe no time in procuring the "reſt, that all pecuniary tranſactions may "be at an end between them."

It

It was with great difficulty he bridled the natural vehemence of his temper, and forbore to expreſs with bitterneſs the diſpleaſure Molyneux's proceeding had given him. More reſolute than ever not to be dictated to by his brother-in-law, and deteſting more than before the marriage which was thus intended to be forced upon him, diſſatisfied with every idea that occurred to him, and having no friend in London to whom he could open his oppreſſed heart, he determined at length to procure a direction to Celeſtina, and returning immediately to Cambridge himſelf. conſult a friend he had there, on whoſe judgment and attachment he had an equal reliance, how he ſhould avoid an alliance with the woman he deteſted and the hazard he now incurred of loſing the woman he adored.

He ſent therefore a ſervant, as ſoon as he returned to his lodgings, to procure from the ſervants of Molyneux a copy of the direction that had been put on the trunks

trunks ſent to Celeſtina. This being obtained, he ordered a poſt-chaiſe, and late as it was, and without giving any account of himſelf either to his ſiſter or the Caſtlenorths, he ſet out for Cambridge, and arrived at his college about four in the morning of the next day.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XI.

CELESTINA in the mean time became better reconciled to the plan of life she had adopted; and after being near a week at her new abode, during which time she heard nothing either of Willoughby or his sister, she wrote to the latter as follows:

"My dear Mrs. Molyneux will be glad "to hear that her wandering friend is set- "tled contentedly, if not happily, in her "new abode, and has already subdued "her mind to her fortune so much as to "regret only the society of those she has "been so long accustomed to love, and "by no means the scenes in which she has "left them. My habitation is in the "house

" houſe of a man who was formerly maſter
" of a coaſting veſſel, in which occupa-
" tion having made money enough to
" ſupport himſelf and his wife in their old
" age, and all his children being married
" and provided for, he built this houſe a
" few miles from the port where he uſed
" to trade: their only ſervant is a mere
" Weſt country paiſanne, who does the
" buſineſs which the good old woman
" herſelf is unequal to; whoſe not fre-
" quent, but ſomewhat loud and ſhrill
" remonſtrances to Jenny, when ſhe is
" careleſs or neglectful, are the only
" ſounds I ever hear to remind me that
" there are ſuch things as anger or con-
" tention in the world. The ſcene around
" me is now dreary enough; but in a few
" weeks ſpring will produce new plea-
" ſures for me: and I ſhall hail the firſt
" primroſe with as much delight as I can
" feel from any thing, but from that moſt
" welcome ſight, the face of an old friend.
" My dear Matilda, you pity, I know, the

" merely

"merely negative life I have choſen: en-
"liven it then ſometimes by your kind
"recollection, and find time now and
"then to write to me, if it be only to ſay
"you are well. Your brother's marriage
"may at this period occupy you; yet I
"hope you will not even now forget me,
"nor fail to recollect the tender intereſt
"which muſt ever exiſt for your happineſs,
"and that of all you love, in the grateful
"heart of your affectionate

"CELESTINA DE MORNAY."

Feb. 7, 17—.

This letter arrived a day after Willoughby's abrupt departure. Between the continual and unceaſing hurry in which ſhe lived, and her vexation at that event, ſhe hardly read it, but threw it careleſsly by on her toilet, where it remained forgotten like the writer of it.

On the ſecond day Willoughby had dined and ſupped in Groſvenor-ſtreet, the whole family had been much diſſatisfied with his conduct,

duct, except his uncle; who retaining much of form and ceremony in his own manners, was willing to impute his coldneſs to reſpect, and his diſtant civility to veneration: but the mother and daughter were now by no means content with his deportment; and though they concealed their feelings as it were by mutual conſent, their pride was equally alarmed, and both reſolved to have an early explanation.

Lady Caſtlenorth, however, whoſe policy only had power to reſtrain awhile the ebullitions of her wounded pride, waited one day in hopes that Willoughby would in a family conference teſtify more ardour for the match than he had done in mixed company; but Willoughby never appeared; and her indignation now knowing no bounds, ſhe ordered her coach, and on the next, ſtalked with more than uſual majeſty into the dreſſing room of Mrs. Molyneux juſt as ſhe had finiſhed her breakfaſt, which was, owing to the hour on which ſhe went to

bed

bed the preceding morning, even later than uſual.

Lady Caſtlenorth hardly ſpoke to Mrs. Molyneux when ſhe entered, but demanded in an imperious tone what was become of Mr. Willoughby?

The lady to whom ſhe thus abruptly addreſſed herſelf was as haughty and of as high conſequence in her own eſtimation as Lady Caſtlenorth herſelf; and feeling and reſenting her rude and peremptory ſtile, ſhe anſwered, with almoſt as little complaiſance in her manner, that ſhe knew not.

"You don't know, Madam!" exclaimed the imperious Viſcounteſs; "you don't know! Very extraordinary ſurely. What am I to underſtand from all this?"

"Of that alſo I am ignorant," replied Mrs. Molyneux. "Mr. Willoughby, Madam, is his own maſter; and I really can no more account for than direct his actions."

"Aſtoniſhing!" re-aſſumed Lady Caſtlenorth: "that a man ſituated as he is,

who is not an abſolute ideot, ſhould behave in this manner in an affair on which his very exiſtence as a man of faſhion depends: but don't imagine, Miſtreſs Molyneux, that my daughter——"

"Dear Madam," interrupted Matilda, irritated by the ſupercilious and inſolent tone in which her Ladyſhip ſpoke, and particularly the emphaſis ſhe put on the word Miſtreſs, "I beg and entreat that you will ſpare your anger. I at leaſt cannot deſerve it, for I have no influence over my brother. I dare ſay he has ſome reaſons for having left London ſo abruptly, though I aſſure you I do not know them."

"You don't!—I do: he is gone after that creature, whom your mother, to her utter diſgrace, brought up in the family, and with whom ſhe ſuffered her ſon to live in habits of intimacy which ſhock me every time I think of it."

At this moment Mr. Molyneux entered with a letter in his hand, and hardly in his haſte noticing Lady Caſtlenorth, he told his

his wife that the letter was that inſtant delivered to him by an expreſs, that his father was dying, and that they muſt immediately ſet out for Ireland at his earneſt entreaty. "Haſten therefore," ſaid he, "to prepare yourſelf, for the chaiſe I have ſent for will be at the door in a moment. Your Ladyſhip will excuſe us I am ſure on ſuch an occaſion," added he, addreſſing himſelf to Lady Caſtlenorth. "Matilda, we have not a moment to loſe: direct your maid to prepare what you want to take with you, and to follow herſelf with the baggage that may not be ſo immediately neceſſary."

"And where is Willoughby?" cried Lady Caſtlenorth, raiſing her voice: "I inſiſt upon ſeeing him."

"I believe he has left London," anſwered Molyneux; "but I aſſure you I know not whither he is gone. I dare ſay your Ladyſhip will ſoon hear of him. In the mean time pray pardon me; it is impoſſible for me now to have the honour of attending you."

He then left the room, as his wife had done already; and Lady Castlenorth, bursting with anger and indignation which she had nobody to listen to, returned in all the fury of mortified pride to her own house.

While she was there meditating how to revenge the neglect shewn to her daughter, of which she now no longer doubted, Willoughby was pouring out all the distresses of his heart to a friend whom heaven seemed to have sent him for their alleviation.

Mr. Vavasour, his most intimate friend, had been absent when he left Cambridge on his hasty and reluctant journey to London, but was now returned, and to him Willoughby immediately disclosed the cause of that uneasiness which his friend perceived he suffered under even before he spoke.

"What shall I do?" said he, as he leaned on the table, "how extricate myself from the most insupportable of engagements? how satisfy this narrow and unfeeling

feeling Molyneux? my ſoul revolts from the odious neceſſity of being obliged to him for forbearance: yet to ſell my eſtates —is more painful to me than any meaſure but marrying Miſs Fitz-Hayman. Yet my promiſe, my aſſurances to my mother—— I ſee not how I can eſcape from the difficulties that encompaſs me."

"You make more of them ſurely, my dear George," replied Vavaſour, "than is neceſſary. What! ſhould either a promiſe or an exigence compel you to be miſerable for life; then indeed there would be no eſcape: but now ſurely, my friend, your eſcape is not difficult."

"Were you ſituated as I am then, how would you act?"

"Why I would without heſitation declare off with the woman I did not like, and marry the woman I did: that is, if I were diſpoſed to marry at all."

"And would you do this, Vavaſour, contrary to a ſolemn promiſe given to her who cannot now releaſe me from it? and

then how can I act in regard to Molyneux? be the conſequence what it will he ſhall never again dun me for money, and——"

"Never!" interrupted Vavaſour warmly, "if you will liſten to me. I am not quite of age it is true, but my fortune is ſuch, that nothing is eaſier than for me to raiſe this paltry five thouſand pounds, or twice the ſum, on no very exorbitant terms. I have already taken up money for my own pleaſures, and ſhall I heſitate when my friend has real occaſion for it? In a week's time the money ſhall be ready for you. Pray then let us hear no more of any difficulties of that ſort, and as for your promiſe—the good lady, when ſhe extorted it, could never think it binding."

"Speak not lightly of her, my dear friend," cried Willoughby, "that I may feel all the kindneſs of the former part of your ſpeech without alloy: ſhe was a woman whom, had you known, you would have reverenced and loved, and it was in kindneſs

kindneſs only that ſhe made me give her an engagement——"

"To make yourſelf miſerable. I am, you know, George, an Epicurean; you are ſomewhat of a Stoic I ſuppoſe; and if that is the caſe, fulfil your promiſe, take your heireſs, and philoſophize at your leiſure. I have never ſeen your Celeſtina, you know; but from your deſcription of her, and your long attachment, I ſhould pity you—I am afraid I ſhould deſpiſe you—I am ſure I ſhould not love you—were you to ſacrifice ſuch a creature to any pecuniary conſiderations. Come, my dear fellow, aſſure yourſelf that if five thouſand pounds or more will relieve you from what weighs on your ſpirits about Molyneux's matter, it is your's; the other affair you muſt ſettle with your own heart, and I leave you to argue it together."

Vavaſour then quitted the room; and Willoughby, releaſed from his anxiety about his debt by the generoſity of his friend, gave himſelf up to all thoſe plea-

fant images which preſented themſelves to his mind. To be united immediately with Celeſtina, to carry her down to Alveſtone, and there to enter on a plan of œconomy, which ſhould in a very few years retrieve his circumſtances, was a viſion which he found ſo much delight in cheriſhing, that he drove from his mind as much as poſſible the painful objections that ſtill cruelly intruded themſelves to deſtroy it: the converſation of Vavaſour helped to put them entirely to flight; and Willoughby, perſuaded that by the projects of œconomy he had formed he ſhould ſoon be enabled to pay his friend the money ſo generouſly offered him, agreed without much heſitation to accept it. The young men then ſettled that they would go the next day but one to London, ſtay there long enough to negociate this buſineſs, and then go down together to Alveſtone, from whence Willoughby, who had no inclination to encounter Lady Caſtlenorth perſonally, determined to write to his uncle, reſigning all

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all pretenſions to the honour intended him, and immediately to complete his marriage with her who had ſo long been miſtreſs of his heart. This arrangement, once made, became every moment more ſeducing to his imagination; ſtill the words of his mother, the ſolemn charge given him with her laſt breath, returned now and then to diſturb his viſionary felicity: but Celeſtina, always ſo lovely in his eyes, leaning on his arm amid the ſhades of Alveſtone, the delight of all who beheld her, the admiration of his friends, the patroneſs of his tenants, the protectreſs of the poor, was an image ſo deliciouſly ſoothing to his fancy, that by indulging it he at length perſuaded himſelf that his mother, who had ſo very tenderly loved her, would, could ſhe be ſenſible of all the happineſs they ſhould ſhare together, applaud his violation of his promiſe and ſanction his choice.

Vavaſour, gay, generous, open hearted, and volatile, always eagerly following him-

ſelf his own inclinations, and as warmly ſolicitous for his friend's gratification as his own, encouraged as much as poſſible all tendency in Willoughby to throw off any adherence to what he deemed tyranny beyond the grave; and by the time the negociation for the loan was completed, which took them up near a week, Willoughby had no longer any ſcruples remaining. His only buſineſs in town then was to pay Molyneux, whoſe conduct had offended him ſo much that he had not been to the houſe: as ſoon however as the money was ready, he wrote a note to his brother-in-law, ſignifying that he would on the next day meet him at his attorney's chambers to ſettle all accounts between them. The ſervant who was ſent brought the note back; and Willoughby then firſt learning that his ſiſter and her huſband were embarked for Ireland, depoſited the money at a banker's, and wrote a cold letter to Molyneux, ſignifying that it waited his orders. He then gave directions to his

his own ſolicitor to take proper receipts on the payment of it, and with Vavaſour haſtened down to Alveſtone, in the neighbourhood of which place he knew Celeſtina was; but he had determined not to ſee her till he had obviated every objection ſhe could make to his plan of happineſs, by breaking at once and for ever with the Caſtlenorths; a taſk on which, reſolved as he was to execute it, he could not think without a mixture of concern and apprehenſion that he was aſhamed of feeling, and dared by no means betray to his friend Vavaſour; who without knowing any thing of the Caſtlenorths himſelf, had made up his mind that they were an odious and diſagreeable ſet, and from ſuch, whatever might be their rank, he always flew away himſelf, and encouraged his friends to do it at whatever riſk. If he was careleſs and even rude towards thoſe whom he did not wiſh to pleaſe, he was altogether as amiable and attentive to thoſe to whom

he ſought to be acceptable. His diſlikes and his attachments were equally warm, and the latter had hitherto been rather warm than permanent.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XII.

WHILE theſe things were paſſing at Cambridge and in London, Celeſtina underwent the cruelleſt anxiety at not hearing from Mrs. Molyneux; but all her conjectures ended in the painful concluſion that the preparations and celebration of Willoughby's marriage entirely engaged her, and prevented her writing. All her reaſon was now ſummoned to ſupport her againſt the ſhock which the certainty of this event would give her. With a beating heart, and in breathleſs agitation, ſhe ran over the paper which once a week a travelling newſman brought from Exeter, and where ſhe knew the marriage of a man of ſo much conſequence in the neighbourhood would not fail to be inſerted.

No,

No ſuch intelligence however appeared; and Celeſtina, imagining that the marriage had notwithſtanding certainly taken place, endeavoured, ſince ſhe could not conquer her regret, to divert it, by trying what ſhe could do towards ſoftening the ſorrows and relieving the diſtreſſes of the unfortunate Jeſſy, whoſe patient endurance of evils, evidently ſeverer than her own, whoſe fortitude in tearing herſelf perhaps for ever from the man ſhe loved, and ſacrificing the indulgence of her affection to his intereſt, made Celeſtina ſometimes aſhamed of the murmurs ſhe found excited in her heart by leſs inconveniences, and bluſh at the reluctance with which ſhe had ſubmitted to the loſs of a man, whoſe regard for her ſeemed already to have yielded to the influence of pecuniary advantage, and family convenience.

But in deſpite of every argument ſhe could bring to ſubdue the pain ariſing from the recollection of loſt happineſs, and totally ſilence the Syren voice of hope which

now

now and then presented the possibility of more favourable days, the uncertainty whether the event to which she laboured to become reconciled had really happened, disturbed and rendered her restless and uneasy. Jessy, to whom she now sent to desire her company for a little time, joyfully accepted the summons; and in her company Celestina felt great satisfaction, though she had never disclosed to her any part of the sorrow that oppressed her, or given the remotest hint of her attachment to Willoughby. All the indulgence she allowed herself was, that of sometimes chusing to walk towards a knoll at the extremity of the common, which afforded an extensive view towards the west; from thence, by the help of a telescope lent her by her landlord, Celestina had discovered a clump of firs in Alvestone Park; and though they were near ten miles distant, and without a glass appeared only a dark spot above the rest of the landscape, she found a melancholy pleasure in distinguishing

guiſhing them, and would frequently, as ſhe leant on Jeſſy's arm in their penſive rambles, fix her eyes on that diſtant object, gaze on it ſteadily for two or three minutes, and then with a deep ſigh turn away, and walk ſilently home.

She encouraged however the artleſs Jeſſy to talk to her of Cathcart; and the poor girl, pleaſed with every opportunity of repeating his name, and flattered by the tender intereſt Celeſtina took in their ſtory, was never weary of ſpeaking of him. She at length acquired confidence enough to produce ſome of the letters he wrote to her; and Celeſtina, who had very naturally imputed much of the praiſe Jeſſy had beſtowed on his writing and on his ſtyle to the fond partiality of her affection for him, was ſurpriſed to find in theſe letters the moſt manly, clear, and ſenſible ſtile ſhe had almoſt ever met with. The generous emulation which appeared between theſe lovers, their diſintereſted tenderneſs, and the ſteadineſs of their mutual attachment,

ment, raiſed in Celeſtina admiration and even reſpect, and every hour encreaſed her inclination to contribute to their happineſs.

But theſe intentions ſhe had no way of executing but by means of Willoughby, who was, as ſhe knew from long experience, ever ready to befriend the unfortunate; and on ſuch an occaſion ſhe thought, that as ſoon as he was married ſhe might, without any impropriety, addreſs herſelf to him; and as the farm which old Winnington, the grandfather of Jeſſy, poſſeſſed, adjoined to his eſtate at Alveſtone, Celeſtina imagined he could hardly fail of having ſome influence, which ſhe knew he would be ready to exert for her unfortunate friend.

In meditating how to adminiſter to the afflictions of others, her own ſorrows were at leaſt mitigated: but the calm ſhe outwardly aſſumed was the mere effort of reſolution, while her anxiety to hear of Willoughby and of his ſiſter encreaſed every hour; and as the delay grew more unaccountable,

countable, it became almoſt inſupportably painful.

It was now the beginning of March: the weather was uncommonly cold and dreary; and a deep ſnow, which had fallen ſome days before, had confined Celeſtina and her companion almoſt entirely to the houſe. It was very unuſual to ſee any perſon paſs by the houſe, near which there was no public road, and the inclemency of the ſeaſon rendered it ſtill leſs frequent: Jeſſy, therefore, who went to the window by accident to fetch ſome work that lay there, mentioned to Celeſtina, as a matter of ſome ſurpriſe, that two foot paſſengers, who had the appearance of gentlemen, were croſſing the common towards the houſe.

Celeſtina, who was at that moment meditating, with her eyes fixed on the fire, on the long, long ſpace of time that had elapſed ſince ſhe had heard of Willoughby, and on all the events that might have taken place in that period, gave very little attention

attention to this intelligence, and on Jeſſy's repeating it, anſwered that probably it was ſome perſons who had loſt their way in the ſnow, and were coming to the houſe for directions to regain the road.

To Jeſſy, however, the idea of Cathcart was ever preſent: one of the ſtrangers was not unlike him in figure, as ſhe fancied, though both were wrapped in great coats; and the poſſibility of his having come in ſearch of her, had no ſooner ſtruck her, than with eager eyes and a beating heart ſhe watched every ſtep they took: at length they entered the little gate that divided the garden of the houſe from the common; Jeſſy was then convinced that neither of them were Cathcart; but her curioſity was ſtrongly excited, and liſtening to the queſtions they put to the ſervant who went to the door, ſhe diſtinctly heard one of them enquire for Miſs de Mornay.

Celeſtina was now in her turn alarmed; and trembling, though ſhe knew not why, ſhe deſired Jeſſy to go down and aſk who it

it was, but before she could be obeyed the door opened, and she saw, with emotions to which language cannot do justice—Willoughby himself!

The first idea that struck her was, that he was come to announce his marriage; and the air of triumph and satisfaction his countenance wore, seemed to tell her he was the happy husband of Miss Fitz Hayman. Long as she had been accustomed to dwell on this idea, she shrunk with terror from it's supposed reality, and pale and trembling drew back, as he eagerly advanced towards her:—"My heavenly girl! my own Celestina!" cried he as he took her hand. This address, from the married Willoughby, seemed an insult: she withdrew her hand with an air of resentment, would have spoken but could not, and unable to support herself sat down.

Willoughby, whose own anxious emotions had too much prevented his considering how she might be affected by his abrupt appearance, now saw that he had

been too precipitate. He placed himſelf by her, and again taking the hand ſhe had withdrawn, he enquired, with more tenderneſs and leſs impetuoſity, if ſhe was ſorry to ſee him. Again Celeſtina would have ſpoken, but her native pride again refuſed to aſſiſt her; and while ſhe was vainly endeavouring to acquire reſolution enough to congratulate him on his ſuppoſed marriage, ſhe learned that he had not only broken for ever with Miſs Fitz-Hayman, but was come to offer himſelf to her, who had from his childhood been the ſole poſſeſſor of his affections.

This ſudden and unexpected happineſs was too much. Her reaſon, which in the ſevereſt calamity had never quite deſerted her, now ſeemed unequal to tidings ſo overwhelming, and for a moment or two ſhe ſat like a ſtatue; till Willoughby, in that well known voice, and with that graceful and manly tenderneſs which had rendered him ever ſo dear to her, related all that had paſſed from the hour of their laſt

laſt parting, and the reſolution he had adopted of ſacrificing that wealth, which could not beſtow happineſs, to the long and incurable paſſion he had conceived for an object ſo deſerving, and without whom no advantages of fortune or ſituation could give his life the ſmalleſt value.

Tears of gratitude and affection now fell from the eyes of Celeſtina; and as he found the tumult of her ſpirits ſubſide, he went on to relate to her, with the moſt generous delicacy, the plans he had formed for their future life, and the means by which he hoped to retrieve his affairs, without ſacrificing his happineſs. Tenderly however as he touched on theſe ſubjects, his violated promiſe to his mother returned with all it's force to the recollection of Celeſtina. Willoughby, whoſe eyes were fixed on her's, ſaw the painful idea by their expreſſion as ſoon as it aroſe, and in a voice that trembled from emotions he could not repreſs, he endeavoured to obviate the objections he feared ſhe was about

about to make, even before ſhe could utter them.

All his eloquence, however, could not ſilence that monitor in the breaſt of Celeſtina, which told her that there was more of ſophiſtry than of ſound reaſon in his arguments; but, fondly attached to him as ſhe was, it was ſophiſtry too enchanting for her to have courage to attempt detecting it. She wiſhed to be convinced Willoughby was right; to ſee him happy had almoſt from her earlieſt recollection been the ſecond wiſh of her heart; for perhaps to have the power of making him ſo had always, even unknown to herſelf, been the firſt: that happineſs ſeemed now to depend upon her; and ſhe determined (after one of thoſe ſhort ſtruggles, in which, when inclination and duty contend, the former has too often the advantage,) to ſtifle within her own boſom every painful remembrance, to think as he thought, and in rendering happy the ſon of her benefactreſs, to acquit herſelf through

through her future life of the debt of gratitude ſhe owed her.

Celeſtina, therefore, made no objection to the propoſals Willoughby laid before her, which were, that they ſhould be married privately in about ten days, and take up their abode at Alveſtone in the ſame ſtile they meant always to reſide in. Theſe preliminaries being arranged, Willoughby beſought her to permit him to introduce Vavaſour to her, who had been waiting below; he went down himſelf to bring up his friend; and Celeſtina, in the moment of his abſence, endeavoured to recall her preſence of mind, and habituate herſelf to think with leſs agitation on the happineſs of being the wife of her beloved Willoughby.

Vavaſour, from the ardour with which his friend had ſpoken of her perſonal perfections, was prepared to find her very lovely; and Willoughby on their firſt interview watched his looks, trying to diſcover if his expectations had been anſwered:

ſwered: they were compleatly ſo: the agitation ſhe had ſuffered had raiſed the glow of her cheeks, and given more ſoftneſs to her eyes, in which the tears yet trembled; while the natural dignity of her manner received in his opinion new charms from the remains of embarraſſment which ſhe endeavoured to ſhake off, and in which, after a few moments, ſhe ſucceeded ſo well, that they all became as much at their eaſe as if they had all been as long acquainted as Willoughby and Celeſtina.

Jeſſy, who had left the room on Willoughby's firſt entrance, was now deſired by Celeſtina to return. During her ſhort abſence, while ſhe prepared a repaſt of cold meat for the hungry travellers, who had walked from Alveſtone, Celeſtina related to them as much of her hiſtory as intereſted both of them in her favour; and Willoughby, who found in every ſentiment and every action of Celeſtina ſomething to encreaſe his tenderneſs and admiration, was charmed with the generous pity ſhe

had ſhewn to her humble friend, and promiſed her all his influence to obtain for her the proviſion ſhe had a right to expect from her grandfather, and unite her to her deſerving lover.

WiNoughby hung with fondneſs approaching to adoration on every word Celeſtina uttered, and forgot, that for this time the delight of ſeeing her muſt be ſhort; Vavaſour, gay, volatile, and enjoying with extreme good humour the happineſs of his friend, was little accuſtomed to think at all; and Jeſſy was in too humble a ſituation to offer her opinion: on Celeſtina only, therefore, the prudence of the whole party depended; and as the ſnow was very deep, and they had between eight and nine miles to Alveſtone, ſhe at laſt ventured to hint that it was time they ſhould go.

To Willoughby, the neceſſity of quitting her had never occurred, and he now heard of it as a ſentence of baniſhment: but Celeſtina repeating that ſhe ſhould be very uneaſy if in ſuch weather they delayed ſo long

long a walk to a late hour in the evening, he ſaw that he ſhould make her really uncomfortable by his ſtay: and having obtained leave to ſee her the next day, and every day till they were to part no more, he at laſt conſented to go, that he and his companion might reach Alveſtone before the night fell.

When he releaſed the hand of Celeſtina, which he kiſſed a thouſand times as he bade her adieu, ſhe turned towards the window, and her eyes followed him acroſs the heath till the furze and thorns at a diſtance concealed him from her ſight. The very traces of his footſteps in the ſnow were dear to her; and in that frame of mind which renders it hardly conſcious of it's own ſenſations, ſhe ſtill gazed on *them* when ſhe could diſtinguiſh *him* no longer. Jeſſy, though ſhe could eaſily account for her ſilence, became after ſome time uneaſy, and ſpeaking to her, rouſed her from her reverie: ſhe then ſat down in her uſual place, and attempted

to quiet the perturbation of her mind by re-aſſuming her uſual occupations; but the ſudden tranſition within the laſt three hours, from lifeleſs deſpondence to a proſpect of the utmoſt felicity ſhe had ever imagined, was too violent to ſuffer her ſpirits to return to their uſual calm. The recollection of her deceaſed benefactreſs, and of the fatal promiſe Willoughby had given her, recurred in deſpite of her endeavours to eſcape from it; and though, reſolute as he appeared to be, to reconcile himſelf to its violation, there was nobody who had power by their interference to prevent the execution of the determination he had made; though nothing was likely to prevent the marriage on which he had reſolved upon; yet the mind of Celeſtina remained impreſſed with a confuſed ſenſation rather than any diſtinct proſpect of the happineſs ſhe had been offered; and the tranſactions of the day appeared like a dream, from which ſhe feared, by examining it's reality, to be awakened.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEITHER the perſon or the mind of Celeſtina were of that ſort which make the ſtrongeſt impreſſion on the firſt view; and intereſting as her figure and face were, it was the grace as well as the ſymmetry of the former, and the expreſſion rather than the beauty of the latter that made her altogether ſo enchanting. Willoughby and Vavaſour were now with her every day; and while her lover found in every hour of thoſe days more reaſon to congratulate himſelf on the choice he had made, his friend grew inſenſibly ſo intereſted for Celeſtina, that volatile and unſteady as he had been till then, he found, that though, conſidering her already as Willoughby's wife, he could form neither hopes or de-

ſigns for himſelf, yet that her happineſs was the firſt wiſh of his heart; and that without violating his warm friendſhip towards his friend, he, for the firſt time in his life, envied a man who was going to be married.

The preſent happineſs of Willoughby could be exceeded in his idea only by that which he imagined he had ſecured to himſelf by having determined to live only for the happineſs of Celeſtina; and in continually contemplating her perfections, he endeavoured to juſtify to himſelf the meaſures he had taken, and to diſmiſs from his mind the unpleaſing circumſtances which might have robbed him of her for ever. He had written, after many attempts, to Lord Caſtlenorth, declining to carry any farther a negociation in which his inclinations had never any ſhare; and though he ſoftened this mortifying information as well as he could, he was ſenſible of the bitterneſs and reſentment it muſt create, and indeed was ſo little ſatisfied himſelf with

with his performance, that after the fifth or ſixth attempt, he would ſtill have delayed or wholly have evaded ſending the letter, if Vavaſour had not with many arguments and much difficulty perſuaded him, that, reſolved as he was to break with the family, any letter he could write in explanation, would be leſs offenſive than total ſilence.

Celeſtina was very ſolicitous to know how he had acquitted himſelf towards his uncle; yet, as he ſeemed ſedulouſly to avoid the ſubject, ſhe feared to give him pain by recurring to it, and yielded perhaps too eaſily to the artifices ſhe ſaw he uſed to draw her thoughts from it: while he, ſtudying every turn of her ſpeaking face, often ſaw, by the penſive caſt it aſſumed, uneaſy thoughts ariſe in her mind; and on thoſe occaſions, exerting himſelf to diſpel them, he delighted to recall their ſparkling vivacity to her eyes:

"E'l lampeggiar dell' angelico riſo," *

* PETRARCH; and the lightning of the angelic ſmile.

which never beſtowed greater charms on any countenance than on that of Celeſtina.

It was now decided that as ſoon as the ſettlements were finiſhed, which Willoughby had directed rather according to his love than to his fortune, and which were likely to take up about three weeks, Celeſtina was to become miſtreſs of Alveſtone. He had promiſed her to forbear making about that delightful place any of the alterations he meditated, till his income was ſo far retrieved as to allow him to do it with prudence, but he had a thouſand reaſons ready why Celeſtina ſhould go there every day; for to reſide there entirely, till ſhe was married, ſhe had refuſed with ſuch firmneſs as left Willoughby nothing to urge with any chance of ſucceſs. Partial as himſelf to this ſpot, where ſhe had paſſed the happieſt hours of her life, ſhe yet in her preſent ſituation, felt diſtreſſed and uneaſy at the thoughts of viſiting it; but Willoughby preſſed it with ſo much earneſtneſs, that, as the weather was now fine,

fine, and ſhe had defended herſelf as long as ſhe could, ſhe at length, on condition of having Jeſſy with her, agreed to go there for a whole day, and that Willoughby ſhould fetch them both in his phaeton. *C'eſt le premier pas qui coute*, ſays a French proverb; and he longed to have this day over, knowing that the memorials of his mother, which Celeſtina would there meet with, and which he feared would give her ſome uneaſy ſenſations, would, after ſhe was accuſtomed to ſee them, loſe their effect on her mind, and that ſhe would inſenſibly learn to behold them rather with agreeable than uneaſy ſentiments.

He perſuaded himſelf that ſuch a revolution had been effected in his own mind, and that notwithſtanding his clear recollection of certain forcible words his mother had uſed in their laſt melancholy interview, he was, in making himſelf happy, doing that, which, if ſhe had yet any know-

ledge of human events, ſhe would moſt warmly approve.

Intoxicated with his paſſion, which reaſon and taſte ſeemed ſo entirely to juſtify, and an extorted promiſe only to oppoſe, Willoughby no longer ſuffered any uneaſy recollections to caſt a ſhade over the bright proſpect opening before him. He now ſaw Celeſtina, the woman he had from his infancy adored, in that ſpot where his local affections were ſo fondly ſettled. Nothing ſeemed likely to impede his paſſing with her there a life of uninterrupted felicity; and till their union could take place, his greateſt anxiety was to detach her imagination from all thoſe objections which might yet linger in her mind, and to confirm her in the perſuaſion that to conſtitute through her future life the happineſs of the ſon of her benefactreſs, would be her beſt acquittal of thoſe obligations ſhe owed to her in the early part of it.

Inſtead, therefore, of ſuffering her to viſit immediately the particular parts of the

the houſe which he knew would moſt forcibly recall ideas which might diſtreſs her, he deſired Vavaſour to attend on Jeſſy, and follow them into the garden, where, when they were at a little diſtance, he related to Celeſtina the meaſures he had already taken to reſtore or rather to introduce her amiable and injured friend to the favour of her grandfather. Celeſtina warmly approved his proceedings, and gratefully acknowledged his kindneſs, while the hope of ſeeing Jeſſy reſcued from the ſevere hardſhips to which ſhe muſt otherwiſe be expoſed, and rewarding the diſintereſted attachment of her deſerving lover, was moſt grateful to her generous heart. Willoughby himſelf never ſeemed ſo perfect as when thus employing his time and his power in the ſervice of the unhappy. The fine ſcenery around her never appeared to ſuch advantage as now, when ſhe leaned on one arm, while with the other he pointed out to her its various beauties; and at this moment the very

ſeaſon

ſeaſon ſeemed to add ſomething to her felicity. Within a few days the whole face of nature was changed: the ſnow, which had covered every object with cold uniformity, had now given place to the bright verdure of infant ſpring; the earlieſt trees and thoſe in the moſt ſheltered ſituations had put forth their tender buds; the copſes were ſtrewn with primroſes and March violets, and the garden glowing with the firſt flowers of the year; while inſtead of the uſually rude winds of the ſeaſon, thoſe gales only blew which

"Call forth the long expecting flowers
"And wake the purple year!"

Miriads of birds, who found food and ſhelter amid the ſhrubberies and wood-walks, ſeemed to hail with ſongs their future lovely protectreſs,

"Hopp'd in her walks and gambol'd in her eyes:"

and while every thing was thus gay and cheerful

cheerful without, the houſe, when ſhe entered it, ſhewed her only contented faces: the old ſervants, it's ancient and faithful inhabitants, had known and loved her from her earlieſt childhood, and rejoiced in the hope of ending their days in her ſervice; the tenants, who loved their young landlord, were glad to find, that inſtead of carrying his rents to London he was coming to ſettle among them; and the poor, who had now for ſome time ſeverely miſſed the bounty which had marked Mrs. Willoughby's annual reſidence among them, invoked bleſſings on her ſon, from whom they were aſſured of more conſtant conſideration, from his own noble nature as well as from the influence of Celeſtina, who, as they well remembered, was formerly the ſucceſsful mediatrix between them and their deceaſed miſtreſs, when her own daughter had frequently heard their petitions with indifference, or avoided them with diſguſt.

In

In a few days after this firſt viſit to Alveſtone, a fortunate circumſtance occurred to facilitate the good offices Willoughby had undertaken in favour of Jeſſy Woodburn. The old female relation who had acquired unbounded influence over her grandfather died ſuddenly; and the old man, thus reſtored to the little power of reflection his very advanced age left him, and alarmed by the death of a perſon younger than himſelf, no longer refuſed to liſten to the remonſtrances of a clergyman in the neighbourhood, who had by Willoughby been engaged to ſpeak to him in favour of his daughter's child. He conſented to ſee her, provided no attempt was made to introduce her father to him, towards whom neither time, age, or ſickneſs, had blunted the aſperity of his hatred; but though theſe odious paſſions retained, from habitual indulgence, all their inveterate malignity, the ſofter feelings of natural affection were dead in him; and rather yielding to importunity than prompted by

by inclination, he conſented to receive his granddaughter to officiate about him as a ſervant, and ſtipulated that during his life ſhe ſhould be no expence to him; thus graſping to the laſt moment of his exiſtence, that which he had never enjoyed, and could no longer want. As he had nobody he valued more, he conſented however, after many perſuaſions, to make a will, by which he gave her every thing, on the expreſs condition, to uſe his own phraſe, that her father "might never be the better for it."

It was neceſſary, though this important point was carried, that Jeſſy ſhould, by reſiding with him, preclude the poſſibility of being again ſuperceded by ſome of thoſe mercenary beings who are in all ranks of life ready to ſurround the couch of the dying miſer: a neceſſity Celeſtina admitted with reluctance, and Jeſſy with tears and regret; but they were both conſoled by the reflection that a very ſhort time muſt in ſome degree re-unite them

them by the removal of Celeſtina to Alveſtone, which was within a walk of the farm at which her friend was now to reſide.

Willoughby, having thus far ſucceeded for the intereſting protegée of Celeſtina, determined to complete his generous work by attending to the ſituation of Cathcart. He knew nothing could more highly oblige *her*, to contribute to whoſe ſlighteſt ſatisfaction was the ſupreme pleaſure of his life; and his own good heart prompted him to loſe no time, in relieving the unmerited diſtreſſes of a deſerving young man: he wrote, therefore, (without communicating what he had done) to Cathcart, encloſed him a bank note for his expences; and informing him of all that paſſed in regard to Jeſſy, deſired that he would relinquiſh his place with the attorney, and come down to Alveſtone, where Willoughby meant that the ſame day which gave him Celeſtina, ſhould unite Cathcart to her humble friend.

The

The joy this unexpected turn of fortune gave to Cathcart can better be imagined than deſcribed. That ſickneſs of the ſoul, which long deſpondence and anxiety had produced, vaniſhed at once: his immediate care was to ſecure his ſiſter's and her children's ſupport during his abſence; and reſerving to himſelf no more of Willoughby's generous preſent than ſufficed for the expences of his journey, he took a tender leave of Mrs. Elphinſtone, aſſuring her that the firſt uſe he would make of his good fortune ſhould be to aſſiſt her; he then ſet out on a hired horſe for Alveſtone, where he arrived ten days before that which was fixed upon for his patron's happineſs and his own.

If Willoughby had been greatly intereſted for him before he ſaw him, he was much more ſo now that he found him very intelligent and well informed, with abilities that might have made his way to any ſituation of life, and a heart that would have done honour to the moſt exalted: his

his knowledge, which was very extenſive, was without pedantry, and his gratitude without ſervility. The meeting between him and Jeſſy, at which Willoughby contrived that Celeſtina ſhould be preſent, was very affecting; and after the firſt tranſports of happineſs ſo unexpected had a little ſubſided, Willoughby explained to them his views for the future. "You, my dear Jeſſy," ſaid he, "muſt not think of leaving your grandfather, who muſt know nothing of your marriage while he lives, which can, according to the courſe of nature, be only a very little time; and as you may ſee each other every day, this partial ſeparation may for that little time be eaſily borne. As for you, Cathcart, you will ſtay with me: I have, in conſequence of my new plan of life, many regulations to make, and many accounts to ſettle, in which you can be of great uſe to me. Poor Beechcroft, my old ſteward, is in his eightieth year, and the palſy has lately made ſuch ravages in his intellects,

lects, that he is unequal to the common buſineſs of his office; while he lives however, and thinks himſelf capable of executing his truſt, I am very unwilling to mortify him by taking the affairs out of his hands: at his death I ſhall not replace him, but become my own ſteward; and you, my good friend, can be of the moſt effectual ſervice to me in preparing every thing for this arrangement: while your neighbourhood to the eſtate of which you will probably ſoon become maſter, will give you an opportunity of inſpecting it, and ſettling thoſe plans for the future which will I hope and believe make you a very fortunate man."

While the conſiderate kindneſs of Willoughby endeared him every hour to Celeſtina, and while the hearts of Cathcart and Jeffy overflowed with gratitude, it would have been hardly poſſible for a happier party to have been any where found than that which now occaſionally inhabited Alveſtone, if the painful recollection of

of Willoughby's violated promiſe could have been entirely expelled from the conſcious recollection of Celeſtina, and if Vavaſour had not ſometimes felt towards Celeſtina ſomething bordering on ſerious love, which was a ſentiment ſo new to him, who had never thought with reſpectful affection of any woman before, and had paſſed too much of his time in ſcenes of faſhionable debauchery, that he hardly knew himſelf what it meant. He formed however no deſigns, for his temper was generous, candid, and artleſs; ſo artleſs indeed that he took no pains to conceal what he felt almoſt without underſtanding his feelings; and frequently fixed his eyes on Celeſtina with ſo impaſſioned a look, or ſpoke to her, or of her, with ſuch unreſerved marks of fondneſs and admiration, that Jeffy and Cathcart both ſaw it with ſome alarm; but Willoughby, too liberal for jealouſy, and knowing his friend more inclined to general libertiniſm among the looſer part of the ſex than capable of a particular

a particular attachment to any woman of character; ſure of Celeſtina's affection, and imputing all Vavaſour's attentions to his admiration of beauty wherever found, either noticed not his manner, or held them to be wholly without conſequence; while Celeſtina, perfectly unconſcious of the power of her own charms, treated him with that affectionate familiarity which his own open and lively manners encouraged, and which his friendſhip for Willoughby, and the obligations they both owed to him, juſtified.

Only three days were now to intervene before that fixed for the double wedding, which was to be celebrated in the pariſh church at Alveſtone, in the preſence only of two truſty ſervants, and Vavaſour, who was to act as father to both the brides.

Very different proſpects of life from thoſe which now were before Willoughby and Celeſtina, had opened to Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux, who, on their arrival in Ireland, had found Sir Oſwald Molyneux

juſt

juſt alive: he lingered unexpectedly a few weeks after their arrival, and then died, leaving to his ſon an immenſe fortune, of which Sir Philip haſtened to take poſſeſſion, and to diſplay, as ſoon as decency permitted, his wealth and his intereſt; while Matilda, now Lady Molyneux, loſt no opportunity of availing herſelf of the eclat which almoſt boundleſs fortune gave to novelty. Nobody was ſo much followed and admired; no taſte was ſo univerſally adopted, no parties ſo ſplendidly attended, as her's; and having thus attained the ſummit of what ſhe fancied happineſs, ſhe was in no haſte to return to England till ſhe had exhauſted the felicity Ireland offered her, and cheerfully acquieſced in her huſband's propoſal of ſtaying one ſummer at their magnificent ſeat about twenty miles from Dublin. In the mean time ſhe had heard from her brother, whoſe reſentment towards her huſband did not extend to her, of his having broke with the Caſtlenorths, and his intentions

tions in regard to Celeſtina. She diſliked both Lady Caſtlenorth and her daughter, and therefore was pleaſed with their mortification and diſappointment: ſhe had now no pecuniary claims on her brother, and heard therefore with indifference his reſolution to marry a woman without fortune; and as to Celeſtina, though ſhe was incapable of any affection for her, yet ſhe thought ſhe would make a good quiet wife for her brother, and be well adapted to that inſipid domeſtic life, his turn for which ſhe had always pitied and deſpiſed. As Willoughby's juſt reſentment againſt Sir Philip had never given her any concern, ſhe gave herſelf no trouble to remove it; and Sir Philip himſelf, above all attention for the feelings of others, and too much a man of the very firſt faſhion to underſtand the claims of relationſhip, or to feel thoſe of friendſhip, was as unconcerned as if no ſuch reſentment had ever been deſerved; and while they both enjoyed their newly acquired conſequence in Ireland, Willoughby

loughby was ſuffered to proceed his own way at Alveſtone without remonſtrance and almoſt without notice.

But neither the neglect of his ſiſter, or the ſullen reſentment of his uncle and Lady Caſtlenorth, from whom he heard nothing, now gave Willoughby any concern: his happineſs it was out of their power to diſturb or prevent, ſince one day only intervened before he was to be the huſband of Celeſtina.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIV.

VAVASOUR, born to a ſplendid fortune, and left by the early death of his parents to the care of guardians, who, while they took ſufficient care of his property, had very little influence over his mind and his morals, had never yet formed a wiſh which it was not immediately in his power to gratify: the growing inclination, therefore, that he found towards Celeſtina, was painful and uneaſy to him, for he had too much honour, and too true a regard for Willoughby, to ſuffer a thought injurious to him to dwell on his mind; and had he been capable of entertaining wiſhes or forming ſchemes againſt his happineſs, he knew that Celeſtina's attachment to his friend was not to be ſhaken, and that he

ſhould excite her contempt and abhorrence inſtead of continuing to enjoy that confidence and regard with which ſhe now favoured him.

But the more hopeleſs his partiality for her was, the more reſtleſs he of courſe became in it's encreaſe: for ſeveral days he endeavoured to conquer or at leaſt to conceal it by redoubling his gaiety: he romped, laughed, and rattled, till his violent ſpirits became even diſtreſſing to Celeſtina: all however would not do; and as he had no notion of enduring any kind of uneaſineſs while there was a chance of relieving himſelf, he at length reſolved to quit Willoughby, and not to return to him till after he was actually married; and this reſolution he prepared to execute the following morning, which was the preceding one to that which was fixed for the marriage.

"I ſhall leave you this morning, George," ſaid he to Willoughby, as they were at breakfaſt together.

"Leave

"Leave me!" cried Willoughby in much ſurpriſe: "for what reaſon?"

"Becauſe I hate all formal ceremonies, and have beſides buſineſs elſewhere."

"Ridiculous! ſurely you are not in earneſt?"

"Perfectly ſo, believe me: never more in earneſt in my life. I'll come back to you in a week or ten days, but I poſitively go this very day."

"Thou art a ſtrange fellow, and there is never any telling where to have thee. Did you not promiſe to be father to the brides? What will Celeſtina ſay?"

"Why, probably as you do—that I am a ſtrange fellow."

"You make me uneaſy, Harry," ſaid Willoughby very gravely. "Whimſical and unſettled as you are, it muſt be ſurely ſomething more than mere whim which urges you to leave me at ſuch a time."

"Not at all," anſwered he gaily: "it is the time in the world you can beſt ſpare me; and upon my ſoul I have buſineſs

to do which I have ſooliſhly neglected, and which I muſt either go after now or a fortnight hence, when I intend to be with you; and ſo, my dear George, we'll talk no more about it: my ſervants are getting ready, and will be at the door in a minute: oh they are driving round. Well, George, God bleſs you, my dear fellow. Give my love to the girls, and tell Celeſtina to ſave me a great piece of bride cake."

Willoughby would again have remonſtrated, but Vavaſour, in his wild way, ran on rallying him about his marriage, and refuſing to liſten to him, till the curricle was ready; into which he ſtepped, after again promiſing to return in a fortnight, and immediately drove away.

Willoughby, though long accuſtomed to theſe ſtarts of caprice from his thoughtleſs friend, was equally ſurpriſed and diſconcerted at a reſolution for which he could not account: he was far from the remoteſt idea of the real cauſe; and, occupied as his thoughts were by Celeſtina, he inveſtigated

gated not ſo deeply the motives of his friend's actions as at another time he might have done.

On the preceding day, moved by his tender reproaches that ſhe had no confidence in his honour, and affected needleſs precaution, Celeſtina had acceded to his wiſhes that ſhe would allow him, as the day was fixed for Thurſday, to fetch her to Alveſtone in the morning of Wedneſday, where Jeſſy was to meet her, and that ſhe would then take her laſt leave of her humble abode on Thorpe Common.

As ſoon, therefore, as Vavaſour was gone, he diſpatched Cathcart for Jeſſy, and haſtened himſelf to Celeſtina, who was ready for him. As they journeyed towards the houſe that was henceforth to be their home, Willoughby, with more than uſual tenderneſs in his voice and manner, entered into a more minute detail than he had ever yet done of the plans he had formed for their future life: with the ſanguine hand of youthful hope, he drew a

picture of uninterrupted felicity, which Celeſtina, involuntarily ſighing, thought too perfect to be realized; and with timid apprehenſion, for which ſhe could not account and was unwilling to betray, ſhe internally aſked herſelf wherefore ſhe could expect to deſerve or enjoy bleſſings ſo much ſuperior to the common lot of humanity.

All, however, that might have been to another an alloy to happineſs, was none to her, ſo far as it related only to herſelf. In marrying her, Willoughby had reſigned all proſpect of ever reſtoring his family to the ſplendid fortune and high conſequence poſſeſſed by his anceſtors, nor could he even retrieve the eſtate he had left, or keep up the place he was ſo fond of, but by relinquiſhing all ſuperfluous expences, and confining himſelf to that mode of life, which was ſome years ſince adopted, but would now be thought below the pretenſions of a man poſſeſſed only of a thouſand a year: in fact Willoughby found, on a cloſe

cloſe inſpection of his affairs, that by living within that income, he might in about ten years clear, without diſmembering his eſtate. "It is enough for happineſs, my Celeſtina," he would ſay; "it is enough to afford us all the decencies, and all the comforts of life, and to aſſiſt thoſe who may not have either. Oh how little reaſon we ſhall have to envy thoſe who have more." Celeſtina aſſented with her whole heart; and if ever an uneaſy reflection aroſe there for a moment, repreſenting that for her he reſigned the ſplendour and luxury in which he might have lived, ſhe recollected her opinion of the greater part of thoſe who moved amid a ſucceſſion of thoſe luxuries, and aſked herſelf whether there was one among them who was ſo much reſpected by others, or ſo well content with himſelf, as Willoughby would probably be, living as he propoſed. She remembered how often, when ſhe was accuſtomed to ſee nearly many of thoſe, who, by adventitious advantages, dazzle at a

diſtance, ſhe had been compelled to aſſent to the truth of that ſevere expreſſion of the ſatiriſt's, which ſays, that it may be ſeen—

" Of how ſmall eſtimation is exorbitant wealth
" In the ſight of God,
" By his beſtowing it on the moſt unworthy
" Of all mortals."

The departure of Vavaſour, of which Willoughby had, with ſome marks of regret and ſurpriſe, on his firſt meeting Celeſtina informed her, had given her concern, as it ſeemed to have been a diſappointment to him; but for herſelf, ſhe felt rather relieved by the abſence of a too lively gueſt. There was at times an unguarded vivacity about him, of which ſhe was not always able to check the exceſs; and though ſhe had never any idea of his partiality to her, nor thought him capable of a ſerious attachment to any woman, there had of late been a warmth and earneſtneſs in his manner which ſhe was afraid

afraid of being called prudiſh if ſhe attempted to repreſs, and yet ſhe could not but feel that it was improper to allow it in her preſent ſituation, and would be more ſo when ſhe became the wife of Willoughby. On their arrival at Alveſtone, the lawyer was ready with the ſettlements: they were immediately executed in the preſence of Cathcart and Jeſſy; and when that unpleaſant ceremony was over, a walk filled up the time till dinner. Nothing was ever ſo gay and happy as Willoughby: Celeſtina was now miſtreſs of his houſe: his happineſs was ſecured almoſt beyond the reach of fate: and ſince only a few hours were to intervene before their marriage, he tenderly chid Celeſtina for her penſive gravity, and endeavoured to engage her thoughts by neceſſary arrangements that he propoſed in the houſe, and by enlarging on thoſe topics which ſhe had liſtened to with ſo much complacency in the morning.

After dinner another walk was propoſed; but juſt as they were riſing from table, a ſervant entered with a letter for Willoughby, which he ſaid had been brought expreſs from Exeter.

He broke the ſeal, which, like the hand of the direction, was unknown to him; he ran over the contents haſtily, changing countenance as he read; and then enquiring if the meſſenger waited, haſtily left the room.

Celeſtina, who watched his looks, was alarmed both by them, and his manner of leaving the room. A moment's reflection ſubdued her apprehenſions; but they were preſently renewed and heightened by his ſending to ſpeak with Cathcart; who after being with him almoſt a quarter of an hour, returned by his directions to inform her, that he was gone on horſeback to Exeter to meet ſome people who had ſent to him about buſineſs which would admit of no delay: he begged Cathcart to tell her that it would be ſoon diſpatched, and

that

that he ſhould certainly return in a few hours.

Celeſtina knew, from his own account, every circumſtance of his fortune; ſhe knew that except the mortgages on his eſtate, the intereſt of which had been punctually paid, he had no pecuniary claims to anſwer but his debt to Vavaſour: ſhe was equally certain that he had no diſpute with any body, and that therefore it could not be an affair of honour, and ſhe thought it certain that if Lady Molyneux or any of his relations had been in the neighbourhood, he would have made no myſtery of their arrival: his abrupt departure, therefore, without ſeeing her, ſurpriſed and troubled her; and neither her own reaſon, which urged how unlikely it was that any diſagreeable buſineſs ſhould detain him, or the arguments of Cathcart and Jeffy, could quiet or mitigate the anxiety which every moment of his abſence encreaſed.

Four, five, ſix hours, had now been paſſed by Celeſtina, while it was light, in traverſing the avenue and the road that led towards Exeter; and after it became dark, in liſtening at the door to every noiſe. It was ten o'clock: a ſtill, ſtar-light night: a low wind conveyed now the diſtant murmur of the water-fall in the park, now the voices of men from the village, where every thing ſoon ſunk into repoſe. Neither Cathcart nor Jeſſy could longer diſguiſe their fears, though neither knew what to dread; but while they affected to believe Celeſtina's apprehenſions in great meaſure groundleſs, their anxious returns to the door to liſten, their reſtleſs inquietude, and various conjectures, convinced her too evidently that they participated the fears they pretended to condemn.

At length about eleven o'clock, a horſe, or as they were willing to believe, horſes, were heard to come faſt along the road: the park gate opened and ſhut with violence. It was Willoughby they all fondly hoped:

hoped: all ran out eagerly, impatient to meet him: as the horſeman approached, however, they diſtinguiſhed him to be not Willoughby, but the ſervant who had attended him.

"Where is your Maſter, Hugh?" ſaid Celeſtina; "is he coming? is he well?"

The man took a letter from his pocket, and anſwered in a dejected tone—"No, Madam, not coming: he ſent me with this letter to Mr. Cathcart."

Celeſtina followed trembling, while Cathcart ran into the hall, and by the light which hung there, read theſe words:

"Dear Cathcart, come to me immediately. I ſhall not return to night. I know not if—— But aſſure Celeſtina of my ſafety. Loſe not a moment in coming to

"your's ever,

Swan, Exeter,
Wedneſday night.

"G. W."

The

The painful ſuſpenſe Celeſtina had before endured, was happineſs and eaſe in compariſon of the vague but terrible apprehenſions that now ſeized her. What could detain him againſt his wiſhes? what meant the unfiniſhed ſentence—"I know not if——?" what could he want with Cathcart? and why not diſcloſe the cauſe of his ſtay, and his buſineſs with Cathcart, if it was only an affair of little conſequence, ſince he could not but know how much his ſudden departure muſt alarm her. The note too ſeemed to have been written with a trembling hand; the lines were crooked, and the letters hardly formed, and the paper blotted: all denoted hurry and confuſion, very unlike Willoughby's manner in matters of mere buſineſs; and the indications of ſome impending evil, alarming enough in themſelves, were exaggerated by the terrors which had now taken entire poſſeſſion of the mind of Celeſtina. Unable to reſtrain her emotions, ſhe ran, hardly knowing whither

whither ſhe went, to the ſtable, where the ſervant who had brought the note was getting ready the horſe on which Cathcart was to go. She eagerly queſtioned the man who was with his maſter? He anſwered that he did not know: that he ſaw nobody with him, but he had heard at the inn that two ladies had come thither that evening, who had ſent the meſſenger to Alveſtone; that he believed they had been with his maſter, but he did not know, and when his maſter ſpoke to him, and gave him the letter for Mr. Cathcart, he was alone and ſeemed very uneaſy, ſaying however little more to him than to deſire he would make what haſte he could.

This account ſerved only to increaſe the terrible obſcurity which tormented Celeſtina. A thouſand other queſtions occurred. Were theſe ladies yet at the inn? Did they travel in their own chaiſe? Had they ſervants with them? Hugh could not anſwer the firſt queſtion; but the other two being ſuch as lay more within the reach.

reach of his obſervation, he anſwered that there were certainly neither ſervants nor horſes at the inn belonging to any ſtranger when he came away.

Cathcart was by this time ready; and ſeeing the extreme inquietude of Celeſtina, he aſſumed the appearance of tranquillity he was far from feeling, ſaid that it was probably ſome buſineſs relative to Mr. Willoughby's eſtates, which had been overlooked and neglected; that at all events he would be back in a few hours, when it was almoſt certain that if Mr. Willoughby did not return himſelf, he ſhould be commiſſioned fully to acquaint her of the reaſons of his detention, and convince her that her fears for his ſafety were groundleſs: in the mean time he beſought her to endeavour to quiet her ſpirits and to take ſome repoſe. Cathcart then departed; and Celeſtina, leaning on the arm of Jeſſy, returned to the houſe; but to follow the advice he had given her, was not in her power; the little ſhe had

had gathered from the ſervant ſerved to awaken new alarms, not leſs painful, though very different from thoſe which had at firſt aſſailed her; then ſhe had a confuſed idea that the abrupt departure of Vavaſour had been occaſioned by ſome miſunderſtanding between them, which had produced a challenge; it was unlikely, but it was not impoſſible; now ſhe gave up that conjecture for another, and ſuppoſed that Willoughby might have formed a connection or engagement with ſome woman, who, hearing of his intended marriage, had thus prevented it by urging her prior claim to his hand: this ſuppoſition was, however, more improbable than the other, from his known integrity and unblemiſhed honour, from his long and tender attachment to her, and from the whole tenor of his morals and his conduct; but however unlikely, it was not quite impoſſible; and the anxious and alarmed ſpirit of Celeſtina ran over the remoteſt poſſibilities, but found in all only exchange of anguiſh.

As

As Cathcart had promiſed to return in a few hours, Celeſtina, certain of not being able to ſleep, would not go to bed; and Jeſſy, who ſhared all her ſolicitude, ſat up with her. As the time approached that Cathcart had named for the probable period of his return, they were again both at the window, and again eagerly liſtening to every noiſe. The ſun aroſe, but diſcovered not the objects of their ſolicitude; and Celeſtina, now unable to reſt within the houſe, beſought Jeſſy to go down with her to the end of the long avenue of elms and into the road, as if the attempt to meet thoſe they expected rendered the ſuſpenſe leſs diſtracting.

Weary of conjecture, and fatigued both in mind and body, they moved ſlowly and melancholy along: neither of them ſpoke, for neither had any comfort to offer the other. Of the labourers, who were come by this time to their work, they enquired if they had heard of their maſter, or ſeen Mr. Cathcart on the road. But no intelligence

gence could be gained of either. The peaſants, however, alarmed by the queſtions and by the looks of thoſe who aſked them, all eagerly offered to go any where, to do any thing their maſter's ſervice might require, and begged Celeſtina to employ them: but though ſhe had ſeveral times, during the long and anxious night, thought of ſending a meſſenger with a letter to Willoughby, or even of going herſelf, ſhe now remembered that all the intelligence ſhe could gain from the firſt expedient, ſhe would probably receive from Cathcart before any meſſenger could get to Exeter; and for the ſecond, that it might be diſpleaſing to Willoughby, were ſhe to appear thus prying into his actions and miſtruſtful of his honour.

Nothing, therefore, remained but to bear, with what firmneſs ſhe could, ſuſpenſe which every moment rendered more inſupportably cruel. Hardly conſcious of what ſhe was doing, and inſenſible of perſonal fatigue, ſhe had advanced near a mile

mile beyond the park, and had partly croſſed a ſandy heath, over which the high road lay, when Jeffy haſtily cried out that Cathcart was coming, he ſaw them at the ſame moment; and haſtening on, leaped from his horſe as ſoon as he came near them.

His countenance was little likely to quiet their fears: he was as pale as death, and his lips trembled as he ſpoke to Celeſtina, and aſſured her, in a voice that ſeemed to contradict the words it hardly articulated, that Mr. Willoughby was well, perfectly well, and had authoriſed him to ſay every thing to her that might make her eaſy.

The hurried manner in which he ſpoke this, the impreſſion of uneaſineſs on his countenance, and the improbability that Willoughby ſhould be well and not return himſelf, all ſtruck forcibly on the mind of Celeſtina, and convinced her that ſomething very fatal had happened. "You deceive me, Cathcart," cried ſhe in the wild

wild and romulous voice of deſpair, "I know you deceive me. Something very dreadful has befallen him: he is dead, or dying: I will go to him, however—I will know the worſt."

Cathcart now took her hands, and with the utmoſt earneſtneſs began again to repeat his aſſurances that Willoughby was not only alive but well. Celeſtina, interrupting him, aſked—"Why then do I not ſee him? Why is he detanied? and what buſineſs of fatal import could keep him ſo long? Cathcart, I will not, I cannot be deceived: tell me at once what I have to ſuffer, and I will endeavour to bear it; but this incertitude, theſe apprehenſions, I cannot endure another hour, nor another moment.

While this dialogue paſſed, he had taken one of her arms within his, and having made a ſign to Jeſſy to take the other, they led her gently towards Alveſtone park gate. Cathcart was ſilent for a moment, as if conſidering how he could ſoften the ſhock

ſhock which it was neceſſary for him to give her; while Celeſtina continued impatiently urging him to tell her the worſt, whatever it might be. "Let me repeat to you, deareſt Madam," ſaid he, "let me repeat to you, that you have nothing to fear for the life of our dear friend; and ſurely whatever other intelligence I have to impart——"

"Other intelligence!" cried Celeſtina: "you have then ſomething to impart which all my fortitude is required to ſuſtain. Willoughby——but no! it is impoſſible: he cannot be unworthy—he cannot have cruelly deceived me—it is impoſſible——"

"It is indeed," replied Cathcart, "in my opinion impoſſible for Mr. Willoughby to be guilty of any unworthy action. You, Miſs de Mornay, have, I am convinced, a ſtrength of underſtanding very uncommon——"

"Cathcart," cried Celeſtina with energy, "this is no time for flattery to prove your opinion

opinion of my underſtanding by daring to entruſt me with this fearful ſecret: the knowledge of it cannot give me ſo much pain as your heſitation."

"I would very fain obey you!" replied he. "What then will you ſay if I tell you, that, though I am wholly ignorant of the cauſe of a reſolution ſo extraordinary, ſo unexpected, I am afraid it will be very long before you ſee Willoughby again, and that he is now many miles diſtant from us; though upon my ſoul, by all my hopes here and hereafter, I ſwear that I neither know the motives of his departure nor whither he is gone."

Celeſtina, prepared as ſhe was for ſome heavy blow, found this hideous uncertainty more than ſhe could ſuſtain: that Willoughby ſhould have quitted her, probably for ever, without aſſigning any cauſe, at the very moment they were to be united; that he ſhould not himſelf have ſeen her to have ſoftened the pain this cruel and unaccountable event muſt inflict;

flict; that he ſhould not even have written to her, but ſhould, in this abrupt and unfeeling way, abandon her to all the miſery of endleſs conjecture, regret and diſappointment; were circumſtances ſo unexpected, ſo inſupportable, that her reaſon, which would have ſuſtained her in almoſt any other exigence, ſeemed for a moment to yield to this: ſhe became extremely faint, her knees trembled, a cold dew hung on her forehead, and all the effort ſhe could make was, to ſignify by a motion of her hand that ſhe could go no farther.

They were then more than half a mile from the park gate: but the road along which they were paſſing was worn, and a bank on either ſide offered her a ſeat. Cathcart and Jeſſy ſat down by her, both ſilent, and almoſt as much affected as ſhe was. She leaned her head on Jeſſy, and after a moment a deep ſigh a little relieved her. She turned her eyes mournfully on Cathcart, with an expreſſion he perfectly underſtood, as ſeeming to ſay, tell me all—and I will try to endure it.

"Do

"Do not think, I conjure you, my dear Madam," continued he, "that the ardent and tender affection of Mr. Willoughby for you is diminiſhed. Were it poſſible for me to do juſtice to the agonies I ſaw him in, when he told me that a ſtrange neceſſity—a neceſſity he could not explain—compelled him to quit you;—if language could deſcribe the wretchedneſs in which he ſeemed to be involved——"

"Do not deſcribe it, dear Cathcart," ſaid Celeſtina, ſpeaking with difficulty. "I can bear my own miſery, terrible as it is, better than the thoughts of his."

"Mitigate his ſufferings then, amiable Miſs de Mornay," interrupted Cathcart, "by collecting all your fortitude, and remembering how much reliance you ought to have on his honour and his affection; and let me be able to ſay, when I write to him, that this ſad ſeparation has not injured your health, nor your opinion of him: believe me, ſuch is the only intelligence that can adminiſter any conſolation to the torn heart of my noble friend."

"I will try then, Cathcart, that he ſhall have it. You know where to write to him? He expects to hear from you, and from me he wiſhes not to hear?"

"He told me," reaſſumed Cathcart, "that as ſoon as he was able he would write to you himſelf: that he was going immediately to London: whither he ſhould go afterwards he knew not; but that a hateful myſtery—— Then he ſtopped; ſeemed to repent having ſaid ſo much; charged me to aſſure you of his everlaſting affection; ſtarted from his ſeat; walked about the room wildly; then again repeated his charge to me that I would not leave you, or ſuffer Jeſſy to leave you, but that you would remain at Alveſtone till you heard from him: again he heſitated, doubted, and wringing my hand, aſked me, with diſturbed looks and in a tremulous voice, if ever wretchedneſs equalled his. I would have beſought him to tell me from whence it aroſe; but as if foreſeeing whither my enquiry would tend, he ſtopped me: 'Cathcart,' cried he,

'you

'you know I have great confidence in you, and that I would entruſt you with this fatal myſtery, which I go now to clear up; but I have ſworn never to divulge the cauſe of my—— what can I ſay?—Oh! Celeſtina! beſt and loveliest of human beings! what muſt be thoſe ſufferings which Willoughby dares not communicate to you!—which your pity and tenderneſs——' Again he broke off, and hurried out of the room. He returned, however, in a few moments, ſomewhat more calm; and alarmed as I had been by his agitation, by the wild eagerneſs of his manner, and the incoherence of his words, I thought it better to ſoothe him than to attempt to obtain an explanation which it coſt him ſo much even to ſpeak of: I contented myſelf therefore with aſſuring him of my implicit obedience to all his commands, and of my conviction that whatever might be your diſtreſs and anxiety, you would acquieſce in all his wiſhes, and that your reliance on him, your affection for him, would not be ſhaken by

this involuntary ſeparation, which, dear Sir, continued I, will ſurely be temporary only; I was going on, but he checked me—'I know not,' ſaid he, with quickneſs—'I know not—involuntary, God knows it is, but *when* it will end!—Oh Celeſtina! is this the day which I have with ſo much delight anticipated!' He now ſtruck his open hand on his forehead, again ſtarted away from me, and again relapſed into all the agonies of ſorrow."

Celeſtina had not hitherto ſhed a tear. Stunned by the greatneſs and ſingularity of her misfortune, terrified by the evil, which its obſcurity rendered doubly fearful, her ſenſes were for ſome moments ſuſpended; but Willoughby weeping, and in deſpair—Willoughby torn from her by an inviſible and reſiſtleſs hand—awakened all her tenderneſs, and tears filled her eyes, as, with a deep ſigh, ſhe caſt them towards heaven, and with claſped hands and in a faint voice cried—"Wherever he goes—whatſoever he does—may God protect and bleſs him; and

and if the remembrance of poor Celeſtina cauſes him any unhappineſs, may he forget her. Indeed, Cathcart," added ſhe, "indeed his happineſs, and not my own, has been always the firſt wiſh of my heart." She would have gone on, but her voice failed her. After a moment's ſilence, however, ſhe ſeemed to have found ſome degree of fortitude and ſtrength—"Let us return to the houſe, my dear Jeſſy," ſaid ſhe, "while I am able, and let us there conſider what it will be right to do."

Cathcart, glad to ſee her more compoſed than he had dared to hope, now again led her forward with the aſſiſtance of Jeſſy. But their help ſeemed no longer requiſite: ſhe hurried on with as much quickneſs as if ſhe expected her ſuſpenſe to be terminated on her reaching the houſe; where ſhe arrived, out of breath, trembling, and agitated. She ſpoke not, but hurried through the hall into the library, where they uſually ſat; and there the firſt object that ſtruck her was Mr. Thorold, the clergy-

man who had been engaged to marry them, the ſame who had, at the requeſt of Willoughby, ſo effectually exerted his zeal and friendſhip in introducing Jeſſy Woodburn to her grandfather, and of whoſe ſociety Willoughby was very fond.

He laid down his book on the entrance of Celeſtina, and prepared to ſalute her with cheerful congratulations, for it was not now more than eight o'clock; he had put his horſe into the ſtable himſelf as was his cuſtom, and walked into the library, where he had been ſome time expecting Willoughby, and began to wonder, as he was a very early riſer, at his delay.

All ideas of bridal feſtivity however were driven from his mind the moment he beheld the countenance of Celeſtina. "My dear Miſs De Mornay," cried he, approaching her, "are you ill?—has any thing happened?" Celeſtina, ſtruck by the ſight of him, could not anſwer, but ſat down in the firſt chair ſhe found, and Cathcart, ſeeing how greatly ſhe was affected, took Mr. Thorold

Thorold by the arm and led him into the garden.

Celeſtina in the mean time leaning againſt Jeſſy, who hung weeping over her, attempted again to recover her reſolution and compoſure. She ſighed deeply. "Jeſſy, my love," ſaid ſhe, when ſhe could command her voice, "I wiſh to return to Thorpe Heath. Methinks I am now an intruder here: ſend, therefore, for ſome conveyance for me; and think for me, my dear friend, for I fear I am incapable of judging for myſelf."

The timid and ſoft tempered Jeſſy was but little likely to direct or ſupport her. "Let us, deareſt Madam," ſaid ſhe, "ſpeak to Cathcart again before you take any reſolution: let us hear Mr. Thorold's opinion."

"Do you then attend them for that purpoſe," replied Celeſtina, "for myſelf, I cannot hear them. I ſhould I think be better were I left alone for a few moments: I will go, therefore, to my own room—my own room? alas! I have none in this houſe!

Let

Let me go, however, Jeſſy, to that which I uſed to call mine. I would recall my diſſipated and diſtracted ſpirits, I would acquire ſome degree of reaſon and reſignation; and ſince wretchedneſs is now irrevocably mine, I would teach this rebellious heart to ſubmit to it."

Jeſſy anſwered not; and Celeſtina riſing, walked ſlowly through the hall, leaning on her friend's arm, towards the ſtair caſe. As ſhe paſſed, ſhe ſaw Willoughby's hat and gloves on the table where he generally placed them; a book he had been reading to her, as they ſauntered in the garden the preceding day, lay by them: Celeſtina ſtarted as if a ſpectre had met her: the painful contraſt between her preſent ſituation and that of a few hours before ſtruck her forcibly: ſhe ſhuddered, and ſnatching up the book, haſtened away with it, as if ſhe apprehended ſomebody would take it from her.

When they reached the door of the apartment which ſhe had choſen for her dreſſing-room,

room, ſhe turned to Jeſſy, and with a melancholy and forced compoſure bade her adieu for an hour. "You will go, my dear," ſaid ſhe, "to Mr. Thorold and Mr. Cathcart, and ſay to the former, with my compliments, that I will endeavour to ſee him if he will be kind enough to ſtay till ten o'clock and breakfaſt here, and tell him too that I depend much on his friendly advice, and that it cannot be given to any being who wants it more or will be more ſenſible of it's value."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.